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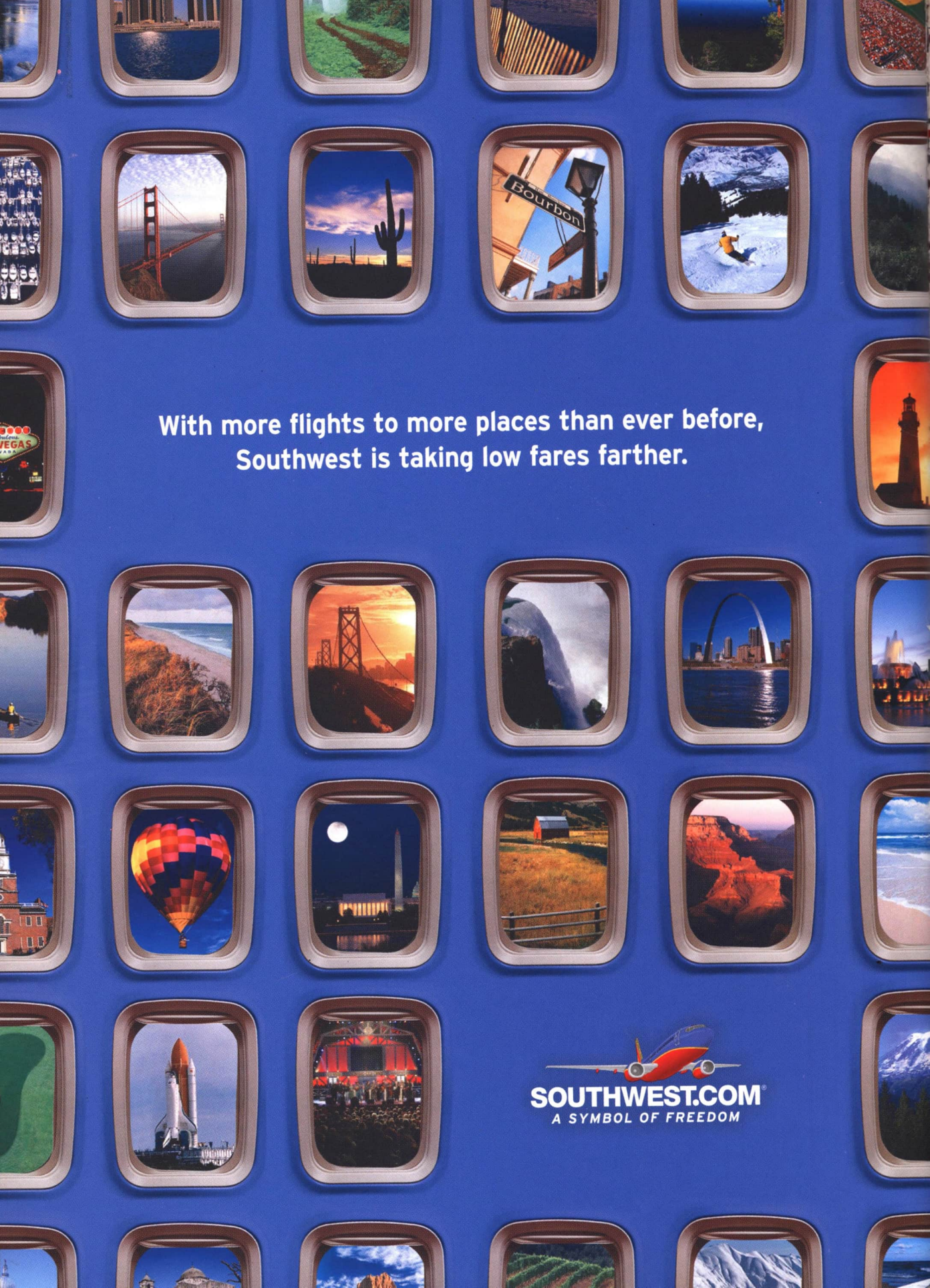
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Volume 88, No. 6 May 2009

The Ring

Take Another Little Piece Of My Heart

Remember that old Charles Bronson movie *Hard Times*? It was one of the first things that crossed my mind when it was revealed that Antonio Margarito had been caught trying to load up his hands prior to his fight with Shane Mosley. A lot of you have probably seen the movie, but for those who have not, a brief synopsis is probably warranted.

Directed by Walter Hill and set in Depression-era New Orleans, Bronson is a freight-hopping hard case, down on his luck and earning his living as a bare-knuckle brawler. He teams up with gambler "Speed" Weed (James Coburn in one of his most memorable roles), and together they kick a lot of ass and make a lot of money. Naturally, the local lowlifes are none too happy, so they import an expensive English mercenary called "Street" to do the finishing in a high-stakes fight to the finish.

In the climactic scene, Bronson has taken over a brutal fight; Street is down and on the verge of defeat, when his employer slides a set of knuckledusters across the floor to him. Street (portrayed by bodybuilder/stuntman/actor Nick Dimitri) looks at the knuckledusters in disgust and slides them back to his boss. Then he gets up, and Bronson ends it.

It might have been a backroom job for money, but what separated Street from the yokels Bronson had beaten up earlier in the film (ordinary bruisers who would have happily used the knuckledusters) was that Street was an honorable man. And what he honored was his profession.

Granted, boxing and the sort of bootleg brawls featured in *Hard Times* are not the same thing. But they are close enough, especially in the broad strokes of pugilistic parable.

Make no mistake, boxing is all about hurting people, but Teddy Brenner and Barney Nagler were onto something when they called their book *Only The Ring Was Square*. Not only does the play on words speak to the shape of the combat zone and the relative honesty of what goes on between the ropes, it is also a subtle reminder that without that underlying foundation of integrity, the soul goes out boxing.

Even a nasty piece of work like Street knew that.

◆◆◆

Some months we lose so many of our boxing brethren that it's difficult to find the space to do justice to all of those who have joined the great majority. This was one of them, with two world champions, a famous manager, and a beloved cutman all taking the final count.

But for me, the death of journalist/broadcaster Reg Gutteridge was felt the sharpest. He was a lively, congenial bundle of wit and wisdom, a boxing man through and through, and friend to scores, among whose ranks I was fortunate to be included.

Born into a boxing family, he was steeped in the sport since childhood, and knew what was what better than the vast majority of his colleagues. But Reg's true gift was the ability to set you straight without making you feel bad, regardless of whether it was in person, in print, or over the airways. The obvious truth of what he said and the humor he used to deliver the message took away the sting.

Not that all of his humor was of the sophisticated sort, however. I still have the postcard Reg sent me decades ago, from my birthplace of Bristol, England. It had a picture of a chimpanzee on the front and a suitably insulting inscription about my ancestry on the back.

I dug it out of an old cardboard box the day I learned of his death, and didn't know whether to laugh or cry, so I settled for a smile and a sniff.

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Opening Shot

Let Us Spray

Kane McCay may indeed need divine intervention if he's to emerge from the three-fight losing streak that's dropped his career mark to 8-5-2. The 31-year old cruiserweight gets some refreshment between rounds of his a unanimous decision loss to Nader Hamdan on the Anthony Mundine-Shannan Taylor undercard in Wollongong, Australia.

PHOTO BY CAMERON SPENCER/GETTY IMAGES

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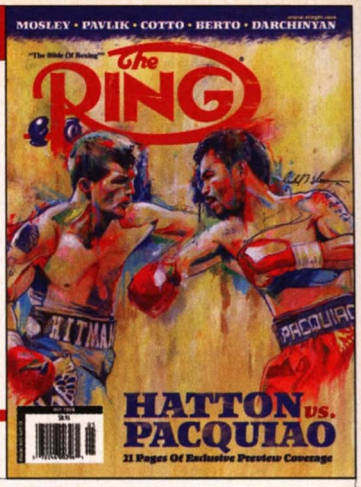

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Ingemar Johansson, 1932-2009

Even though he was champion of Europe and had knocked out contenders Henry Cooper and Eddie Machen, when Ingemar Johansson came from Sweden to New York to fight for the heavyweight championship, he was derided as an unfit challenger for Floyd Patterson. "The United Nations should step in and prevent" the fight, wrote columnist Jimmy Cannon, adding that Johansson "is so bad that I doubt what my eyes have seen."

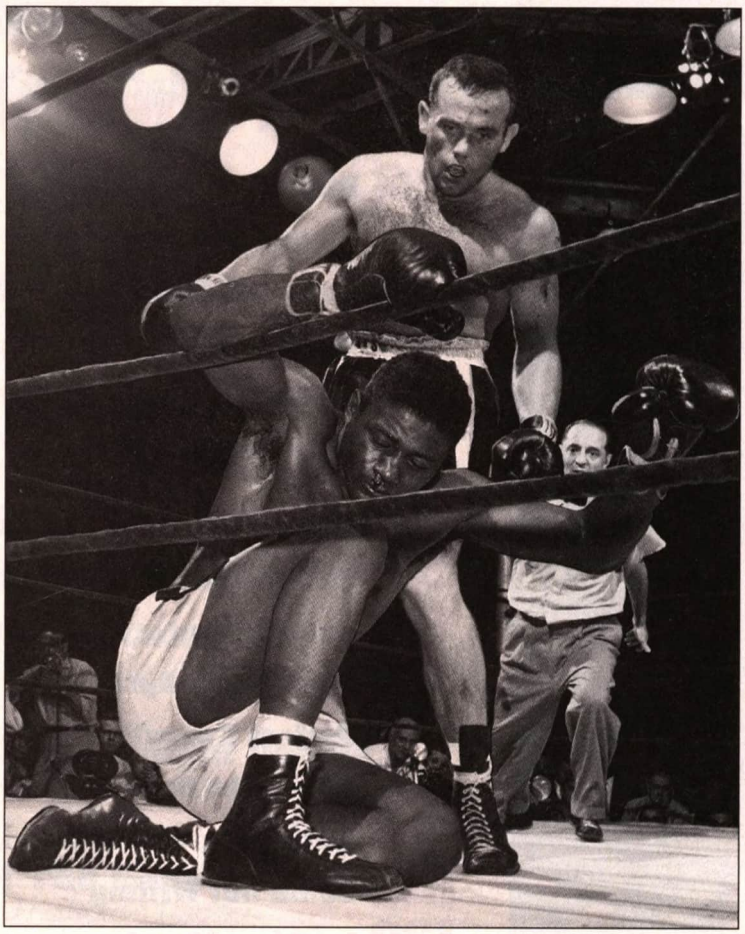
Bad press didn't faze the dimple-chinned fighter called "Ingo," who died in Sweden on January 30 at age 76, after a decade-long decline due to Alzheimer's disease. In 1952, Johansson was flayed unmercifully as a coward and a national disgrace by the media in his homeland after he was disqualified in the heavyweight finals of the Olympic Games for his unwillingness to mix it up with American Ed Sanders. The Olympic poobahs refused to even give him his silver medal.

All was forgiven when Ingo demolished Patterson in three rounds in their June 26, 1959, fight at Yankee Stadium. The "Hammer Of Thor" Johansson carried in his right hand put the champion on the deck seven times in such an impressive display that the Associated Press proclaimed the new titleholder Athlete of the Year.

The heavyweight champion of the world was actually a sought-after commodity in those days, and Ingo made the rounds, singing with Dinah Shore on her TV show and acting in the movie *All The Young Men*. He even issued an engrossing and charmingly offbeat autobiography, *Seconds Out Of The Ring* (shaking hands with the shy, diffident Patterson, wrote Ingo, was like shaking with "a lace curtain"; the famously grungy Stillman's Gym in New York was "America's best all-round instructional institution").

Patterson's retribution in their June 20, 1960, rematch was brutal, and the sight of Johansson's left foot shaking as he was counted out in the fifth round is one of the most chilling in heavyweight history. The thrilling rubber match on March 16, 1961, saw the fighters trade knockdowns until Patterson made one stick in round six. Two years later, Ingo won a 12-round decision over Britain's Brian London, though he was knocked cold in the final seconds of the fight. Amid reports of neurological decline, the 26-2 (17) Swede retired.

His induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2002 is still a hot-button topic among some ring experts, but the smart ones keep their mouths shut about it in Sweden, where Ingo was a towering icon, and deservedly so.



Johansson kayos Patterson in 1959

Becoming heavyweight champion of the world was the ultimate redemption for him, of course, but nothing demonstrated Johansson's courage and character better than his refusal to run and hide after the Olympic debacle of '52. "I moved in a nightmare" after what happened then, he wrote in his autobiography, "and everything around me was twisted and distorted. It was as if I had tried to speak and no one had understood me."

That big right hand spoke fluently for him, and years after those Olympics, they finally gave Ingo his silver medal. The example he set for everyone who admires guts and soft-spoken fortitude was golden.

—Pete Ehrmann

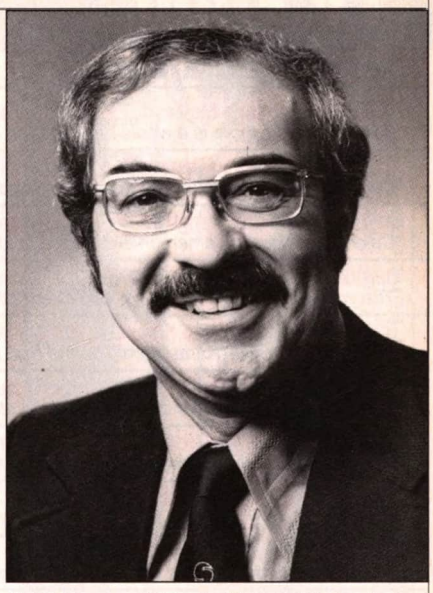
Reg Gutteridge, 1924-2009

The late Reg Gutteridge was as legendary for his wit as he was for his journalism and commentary. When the World War II epic *The Longest Day* was released in British cinemas, his friend and colleague, Colin Hart, asked him if he would go to see it. "What for?" asked Reg. "I had a bit part in the original."

As a 20-year-old Royal Artillery Gunner, Gutteridge lost his left leg in Normandy when he stepped on a landmine shortly after the Allied landings. "Give Gerry [British slang for German soldiers] an inch and he'll take a foot," Gutteridge quipped to the driver of his Sherman tank, the first in an endless line of jokes about his misfortune. Once in San Remo, Italy, he emerged out of the Mediterranean Sea, hopping on one leg, having left his prosthetic leg under a towel on the beach. "Shark, shark," he shouted. On another occasion, a French TV reporter approached him during a European title fight in Rouen and asked, "Monsieur Gutteridge, I understand you lost your leg in this area during the war?" Reg replied, "Blimey, you haven't found it, have you?"

Beneath the earthy humor forged in his working-class roots in Islington, north London, lay the strongest journalistic instincts and a passion for boxing. He boxed at flyweight as an amateur, following in the footsteps of his fighting grandfather, Arthur, his father, Dick, and his uncle, Harry, the famous Gutteridge twins who were the top trainers and cornermen in Britain in the 1920s and '30s. He joined the *Evening News*, then London's foremost newspaper, as a copy boy and became boxing correspondent, a position he held until it folded in 1980. By this time, he was more famous as the voice of boxing on British network ITV.

Fighters worldwide, from Sugar Ray Robinson to Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard to Mike Tyson, loved and respected him. When he was badly ill in London's Hammersmith Hospital in the late-1980s, Ali visited him unannounced to pray at his bedside. "When I opened my eyes and saw Ali standing there, I thought I was hallucinating," he revealed. Even Sonny Liston warmed to him after declaring before the first Muhammad Ali-Henry Cooper fight in 1963 that British people were weak. Reg lifted an ice pick from the dinner table and stuck it in his leg repeatedly. Liston's jaw dropped—until the prosthetic limb was revealed.



Gutteridge was Briton's "Voice Of Boxing"

Gutteridge, who passed away on January 24, was 84 and is survived by his wife, Connie, daughter Sally and four grandsons.

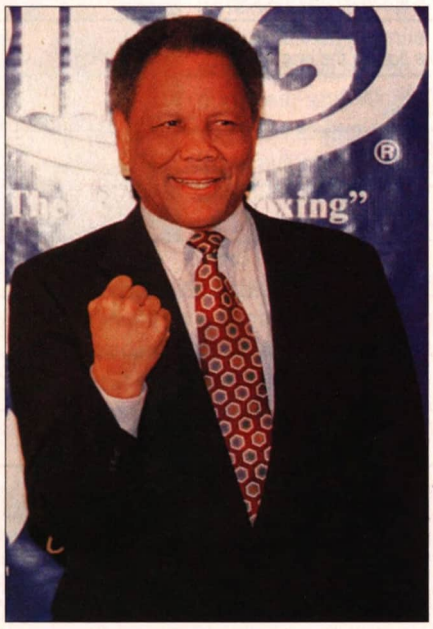
—Brian Doogan

Jose Torres, 1936-2009

Jose Torres started boxing in the U.S. Army to escape the grunt duty piled on new soldiers. Critics detected a similar vein of opportunism running through his subsequent notable careers in boxing, social activism, and journalism; but it's as plain as the agony on Willie Pastrano's face in their 1965 light heavyweight title fight that Torres, who died of a heart attack on January 19, at 72, was above-average at just about everything he did.

After just 25 amateur bouts, the native of Puerto Rico fought in the 1956 Olympics. Torres won the silver medal as a light middleweight, and then became the idol of Latino fans that packed St. Nick's and the Eastern Parkway Arenas in New York to cheer his ascendancy in the pros.

But the paranoid caution of manager Cus D'Amato cooled their ardor until Torres flattened ex-middleweight champion Bobo Olson in one round, and then became more frenzied than ever that night against Pastrano when 18,000-plus fans at Madison Square Garden witnessed, in the words of reporter Jim McCully, "the awesome sight of a perfectly muscled and trained animal guided by a razor-sharp mind destroy, literally, another human being."



Renaissance man Torres in 1997

While he defended the title three times (Torres' decision win over Eddie Cotton was THE RING's 1966 Fight of the Year) before losing it to Dick Tiger, Torres wasn't the same fighter. Intellectual mentors Norman Mailer and Sen. Robert Kennedy steered him to literary and political opportunities that, by Torres' own admission, dulled

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TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
01/24/09	Shane Mosley KO 9 Antonio Margarito	HBO	w	A+	A	B+
	Forget the loss, there is a whole new wrap on Margarito now					
01/30/09	Antonin Decarie W 12 Dorin Spivey	ESPN2	w	C+	C+	C
	Canadian shows more moves than ringside go-go dancers					
01/30/09	Juan Urango W 12 Herman Ngoudjo	ESPN2	jw	B+	B	C+
	Colombian defeats Cameroonian in Canada to win alphabet belt					
02/06/09	Omar Chavez W 4 Rodolfo Armenta	TV Azteca	jw	C-	C+	C
	The youngest Chavez son is no Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.					
02/06/09	Jesus Soto Karass W 10 Carson Jones	TV Azteca	w	B-	C	B+
	If he worked harder, Karass could be the next Margarito					
02/06/09	John Molina KO 3 Kpakpo Allotey	Showtime	l	C	C+	B-
	Broad-shouldered banger delivers bodyshot stoppage					
02/06/09	Andre Ward W 10 Henry Buchanan	Showtime	sm	B-	C	D
	Ward continues to win; fans continue to be indifferent					
02/06/09	Fernando Guerrero W 8 Gabriel Rosado	ESPN2	m	C	C+	C+
	Guerrero already owns the best local fan base in America					
02/06/09	Yusaf Mack W 12 Chris Henry	ESPN2	lh	B	B	B
	Outquick is not a word, but it is how Mack won the fight					
02/07/09	Denis Boytsov KO 2 Israel Garcia	PPV	h	C+	C+	C+
	Is Germany the home of every promising heavyweight prospect?					
02/07/09	Andriy Kotelnik W 12 Marcos Maidana	PPV	jw	A-	B+	A-
	Fight elevates both: Kotelnik a solid champ, Maidana a legit contender					
02/07/09	Ruslan Chagaev Tech. W 6 Carl Drumond	PPV	h	B+	C	D+
	Cut adds drama, but shortens the fight					
02/07/09	Antonio DeMarco KO 9 Almazbek Raiymkulov	Showtime	l	B-	B+	B-
	Exciting DeMarco plays it safe, but still gets the kayo win					
02/07/09	Vic Darchinyan KO 11 Jorge Arce	Showtime	jb	A-	B	B-
	Darchinyan wins battle of bullies					
02/13/09	Ray Robinson KO 3 Darnell Jiles	ESPN2	w	C-	B-	C
	Young prospects meet early in their careers; we need more of this					
02/13/09	Carlos Molina W 10 Alexis Camacho	ESPN2	w	C	C+	C+
	Reputed knockout artist outboxed by a reputed clubfighter					
02/14/09	Alfredo Angulo KO 5 Cosme Rivera	HBO	jm	B-	C+	C+
	Anyone who stands in front of "El Perro" is dog meat					
02/14/09	Sergio Martinez D 12 Kermit Cintron	HBO	jm	A-	A-	C+
	Martinez robbed twice, once by bad refereeing and again by bad judging					
02/14/09	Nate Campbell W 12 Ali Funeka	HBO	l	A	A-	B+
	Campbell loses belts on the scales and barely wins fight in the ring					
02/20/09	Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 1 Walter Estrada	ESPN2	f	B	C	C
	Proof that a nerve directly connects the chin and knees					
02/20/09	Breidis Prescott W Disq. 10 Humberto Toledo	ESPN2	l	B	C+	C
	Toledo gives biting commentary on Prescott skills					
02/21/09	John Duddy W 10 Matt Vanda	PPV	m	B-	B-	C+
	Rusty Duddy gets hammered in 10th, but wins every other round					
02/21/09	**Kelly Pavlik KO 9 Marco Rubio**	**PPV**	**m**	**B+**	**C**	**C-**
	Rubio worst middleweight challenger since Gary Lockett					
02/21/09	Miguel Cotto KO 5 Michael Jennings	PPV	w	A-	C	C+
	The question was never about this fight; it's what comes next					
02/25/09	Rico Hoye W 8 Akinyemi Laleye	Versus	c	C+	B-	C
	Hoye outguns "AK" Laleye					
02/25/09	Troy Ross KO 4 Ehinomen Ehikhamenor	Versus	c	B-	B	C+
	Canadian scores three kayos in four fights to win The Contender					

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

(Continued from Page 9)

boxing's luster for him. "I think I became a worse fighter after I became champion because I didn't have the interest no more," the 41-3-1 (29) Torres told Peter Heller.

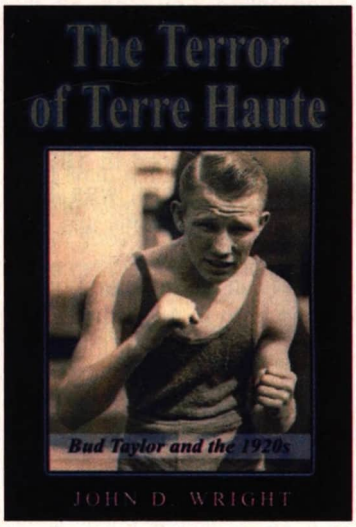
Later he chaired the New York Athletic Commission and authored biographies of Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson. In his introduction to *Sting Like A Bee: The Muhammad Ali Story*, Mailer wrote: "Torres did not have the kind of hunger which drives men to transcendence" in boxing. But he had enough to merit induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997.

—Pete Ehrmann

Boxing Bookshelf

Bud Taylor both won and lost his National Boxing Association bantamweight title outside the ring, but any notion that he was just another guppy in the vast alphabet soup of boxing champions is put down for the count by *The Terror Of Terre Haute: Bud Taylor And The 1920s* (Dog Ear Publishing, 320 pages, $20).

John D. Wright has produced a well-researched biography of the fearsome Hoosier blond to whom boxing was "a bloodletting exchange of blows until one man dropped, and nothing resembling a minuet or a fencing match." That's exactly the attitude you would expect from someone, Wright tells us, who as a youngster was expelled from school 13 times in a single year for brawling.



The surest way to get a bully to lay off in those days was to warn him, "I will tell Bud Taylor on you."

Taylor started fighting professionally in 1920, and as his "Sweetheart"—the fighter's pet name for his big right hand punch—did its job, a lot of good fighters developed the same trepidation about facing the 5'6" terror. The NBA recognized him as 118-pound champ in 1926, after Charley Phil Rosenberg ditched out of their scheduled fight. A year earlier, Taylor had inflicted the first loss on Jimmy McLarnin's record. McLarnin won a return (by disqualification), but Taylor won the rubber match. Taylor successfully defended his belt in a torrid 15-rounder against future lightweight champ Tony Canzonari, and his 166-bout record is replete with other famous names and battles that earned Taylor induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2005.

By the time he beat Canzonari, Wright writes, Taylor "had become famous for taking a beating to give a worse one." By then he had also killed two opponents in the ring—Frankie Jerome and Clever Sencio. Outside the ring, says Wright, Taylor was "a sentimental man who allowed himself to cry openly and liked to present women with flowers." Later in his career, reporters were astonished to see Taylor actually smile after taking wicked punches, and Wright suggests several times that Taylor welcomed the punishment out of a "subconscious need to answer for the deaths" he caused between the ropes.

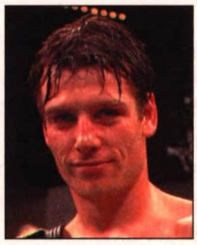
That might be a stretch, but Wright's book is recommended for its generous detail and the spotlight it puts on a great fighter who, in the words of one sportswriter, came "pretty close to being the strongest walking and talking exhibit [boxing] can advance to justify its existence."

The book is available on-line through the website www.budboxer.com (add $2.58 for shipping).

—Pete Ehrmann

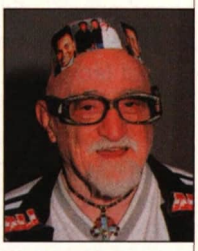
Outside the Ropes

Former heavyweight champion **Muhammad Ali** received the 2009 President's Award at the NAACP Image Award ceremony in Los Angeles. The NAACP said Ali's accomplishments in the boxing ring are matched by his record of social activism and humanitarian efforts ... Former light heavyweight and super middleweight champion **Joe Calzaghe** spoke at the Cardiff, Wales, launch for a police anti-knife crime DVD aimed at young people carrying knives. "If you bring back boxing to schools like they used to, those problems wouldn't happen," said Calzaghe. "Children growing up wouldn't think they had to carry a knife and do cowardly things to prove something. For many people, life on the streets can be tough, but the use of knives is not the answer" ... Undefeated middleweight **John Duddy** has filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging that his manger, **Tony McLoughran**, violated his fiduciary duty to his client, and that his promoter, **Irish Ropes**, which is run by McLoughran's brother, **Eddie McLoughran**, failed to pay his contractual minimum fee for certain fights ... **Pia Anatalia Quijada**, the 27-year-old wife of **Manny Pacquiao**'s driver, **Joseph Jose**, was arrested by Los Angeles police in January and charged with one count of grand theft and 32 counts of forgery. Quijada is accused of stealing more than $89,000 from Pacquiao's Wells Fargo bank account ... In February, the district court in Colorado Springs made a summary judgment in favor of the **United States Amateur Boxing Foundation** in its case against **United States Amateur Boxing Inc.** According to William Deeter, long-time trustee of the Foundation, USA Boxing in effect raided the USA Boxing Foundation bank account, withdrawing more than $1.8-million, after changing the plaintiff's Articles of Incorporation, which included seating of trustees and expenditure of funds. The court ruled that USA Boxing did nor have the power to amend the Articles of Incorporation and that it took the funds in violation of the law and without authorization ... The **World Boxing Organization** has obtained a judicial victory in San Juan (Puerto Rico) Superior Court over former Regional Vice President **John Montano** (now State Athletic Commissioner of Arizona), former referee **Ismael "Wiso" Fernandez**, and his wife, former WBO executive **Virginia Pinto**. The court ruled that they fraudulently schemed to sanction fights under the name North American Boxing Organization, a WBO affiliate dating back to 1996. Sanctioning fees in the amount of $92,000 were placed in an account in Arizona. Judge **Ivonne Diaz** ordered the co-defendants to pay the WBO more than $200,000, which includes interest, damages, and attorney fees ... Federal prosecutors charged **Shane Crampton**, 38, with extortion and wire fraud connected to his dealing with Detroit-based **Clip Boxing Inc.** and its founder, promoter **Carlos Llinas**. Crampton, a former tribal boxing commissioner, is accused of demanding a $1,000 payment from the promoter to book his fight cards at the Little River Casino and Resort. Crampton denies the charge ... Former heavyweight contender **Scott LeDoux**, 60, has been diagnosed with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or, as it is often called, Lou Gehrig's disease, which attacks nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord and robs victims of their ability to move and speak. There is no cure and few options for treatment. LeDoux, who retired in 1983 with a 33-12-4 (22) record, was TKO'd by **Larry Holmes** in his only title fight, July 7, 1980 ... Manager **Luis Spada** died January 17 in his adopted homeland of Panama. Spada, who was born in Argentina, was best know for reviving **Roberto Duran**'s career following his infamous "No Mas" loss to **Ray Leonard** in 1980. Spada also managed two other outstanding Panamanian fighters, **Hilario Zapata**, who held the WBC light flyweight and WBA flyweight titles, and former WBA minimum and light flyweight titleholder **Rosendo Alvarez** ... Legendary cutman **Vasil "Chuck" Bodak**, 92, died on February 5 at a private care residence in Orange County, California. Bodak never fully recovered from a stroke he suffered in August 2007. Originally from Gary, Indiana, Bodak was a colorful personality, famous for taping photos of his fighters to his head. During his long career, he worked with such famous fighters as **Muhammad Ali**, **Julio Cesar Chavez**, **Thomas Hearns**, **Evander Holyfield**, and **Oscar De La Hoya**. Bodak also co-authored (with **Neil Milbert**) a book called *Boxing Basics* and appeared in the 1999 movie *Play It To The Bone*, in which he portrayed actor **Antonio Banderas**' cutman.



Duddy: Sues manager and promoter

LeDoux: Lou Gehrig's disease victim



Bodak: Congenial cutman dies

Quotable

"Joe would probably have tapped and slapped his way to a boring points win, but I guarantee you I will smoke Taylor's boots and destroy him."

—WBC super middleweight titleholder Carl Froch, contrasting what he hopes to do to Jermain Taylor, as compared to what he thinks might have happened if retired super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe had fought him

"He talks crap all the time. That's why 95 percent of the country hates him."

—Australian middleweight Shannon Taylor's opinion of countryman Anthony Mundine

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended March 1, 2009

Heavyweights: No changes.
Cruiserweights: Marco Huck (sixth last issue) switches with Enzo Maccarinelli (fifth last issue). Troy Ross enters at nine, replacing B.J. Flores (ninth last issue) based on a greater activity and competition level.
Light Heavyweights: Yusaf Mack debuts at 10 after beating Chris Henry (10th last issue), who exits.
Super Middleweights: No changes.
Middleweights: Marco Antonio Rubio (eighth last issue) exits after losing badly to reigning world middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik. The move allows Amin Asikainen (ninth last issue) and Daniel Geale (10th last issue) to rise one place each, making room for John Duddy to enter at 10.
Junior Middleweights: Sergio Martinez (sixth last issue) changes places with Sergio Mora (fifth last issue).
Welterweights: Shane Mosley (third last issue) surges to number one after dominating Antonio Margarito (first last issue), who falls to three. Margarito stays in the ratings despite his suspension because he is eligible to fight outside the United States.
Junior Welterweights: Juan Urango (eighth last issue) switches places with Herman Ngoudjo (fifth last issue), after Urango decisioned Ngoudjo. Nate Campbell enters at 10, replacing the departing Juan Lazcano (10th last issue).
Lightweights: Nate Campbell (first last issue) exits because he can't make the 135-pound limit. Manny Pacquiao (second last issue) leaves to fight at junior welterweight and welterweight. The reshuffling enables everyone rated from three to 10 a two-place bump up, enabling Breidis Prescott to enter the ratings at nine and Anthony Peterson to re-enter the ratings at 10.
Junior Lightweights: Because Rocky Juarez (third last issue) dropped to featherweight, everyone rated from four to 10 moved up one place each, creating an opening for Robert Guerrero to enter at 10.
Featherweights: Rocky Juarez enters at four, after his valiant 12-round draw against number-one rated Chris John. Juarez' inclusion drops everyone rated from four to 10 one spot each, eliminating Choi Tse-veenpurev (10th last issue) from the ratings.
Junior Featherweights: No changes.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior Bantamweights: Jorge Arce (fifth last issue) drops to eight after being stopped by number-one rated Vic Darchinyan. Arce's demotion elevates Jose Navarro (seventh last issue) and Z Gorres (eighth last issue) up one place each.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior Flyweights: No changes.
Strawweights: No changes.
Pound-for-pound: Antonio Margarito (seventh last issue) and Miguel Cotto (eighth last issue) exit, moving Ivan Calderon (ninth last issue) to seven and Ricky Hatton (10th last issue) to eight. Celestino Caballero debuts at nine and Vic Darchinyan enters at 10.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Welterweight
2. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
3. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
4. **Israel Vazquez**
   Junior Featherweight
5. **Shane Mosley**
   Welterweight
6. **Rafael Marquez**
   Junior Featherweight
7. **Ivan Calderon**
   Junior Flyweight
8. **Ricky Hatton**
   Junior Welterweight
9. **Celestino Caballero**
   Junior Featherweight
10. **Vic Darchinyan**
    Junior Bantamweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **ringtv.com**

[The Ring Ratings]

For Period Ended March 1, 2009

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Draw with Rocky Juarez kept Chris John in the top featherweight spot

Heavyweights
Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 52-3 (46)
2. **VITALI KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 36-2 (35)
3. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 25-0-1 (17)
4. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN** Russia 16-0 (12)
5. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 50-1 (34)
6. **SULTAN IBRAGIMOV** Russia 22-1-1 (17)
7. **SAMUEL PETER** Nigeria 30-2 (23)
8. **OLEG MASKAEV** Kazakhstan 35-6 (26)
9. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** Cuba 44-1 (35)
10. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO** Ukraine 29-0 (19)

Jr. Middleweights
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 41-3 (29)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS** Augusta, GA 36-1 (27)
3. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Belize 42-11-1 (21)
4. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 36-5 (11)
5. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** Argentina 44-1-2 (24)
6. **SERGIO MORA** Los Angeles, CA 21-1-1 (5)
7. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK** Ukraine 36-0 (22)
8. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 32-3-1 (23)
9. **JOACHIM ALCINE** Haiti 30-1 (19)
10. **JAMES KIRKLAND** Austin, TX 24-0 (21)

Featherweights
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 42-0-2 (22)
2. **STEVEN LUEVANO** La Puente, CA 36-1-1 (15)
3. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 37-1-2 (27)
4. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 28-4 (20)
5. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 27-1-2 (19)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO** Puerto Rico 19-1-1 (14)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 25-4-1 (13)
8. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 63-6-1 (39)
9. **TAKAHIRO AOH** Japan 16-1-1 (8)
10. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ** Mexico 38-11-1 (23)

Jr. Featherweights
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 43-4 (31)

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 37-5 (33)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 31-2 (22)
3. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 24-0 (22)
4. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 37-1 (26)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 35-2 (31)
6. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 28-1 (11)
7. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 34-1-2 (21)
8. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 40-6 (34)
9. **RENDALL MUNROE** England 17-1 (7)
10. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** Japan 33-4-3 (20)

Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 25-2 (9)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO** Panama 24-1-1 (8)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 21-1-2 (7)
4. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 22-2 (18)
5. **JOSEPH AGBEKO** Ghana 26-1 (22)
6. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 54-6-2 (36)
7. **ABNER MARES** Mexico 17-0 (10)
8. **VUSI MALINGA** South Africa 18-2-1 (11)
9. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ** Panama 27-2 (20)
10. **WILLIAM GONZALEZ** Nicaragua 21-3 (19)

Cruiserweights
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: TOMASZ ADAMEK
Poland 37-1 (25)

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 21-2 (11)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 41-2 (31)
3. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 36-3-2 (28)
4. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany 29-4-1 (18)
5. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 24-1 (19)
6. **ENZO MACCARINELLI**
Wales 29-2 (22)
7. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 26-1-1 (19)
8. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 26-1 (10)
9. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 21-1 (15)
10. **MATT GODFREY**
Providence, RI 18-1 (10)

Light Heavyweights
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 49-5-1 (32)
2. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 27-0 (17)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 49-12-2 (33)
4. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 27-5 (19)
5. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 30-0 (17)
6. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 52-5 (38)
7. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 42-4-1 (24)
8. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 25-0 (15)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 32-3 (17)
10. **YUSAF MACK**
Philadelphia, PA 27-2-2 (16)

Super Middleweights
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 41-1 (31)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 23-0 (18)
3. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 27-2 (21)
4. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 35-3 (23)
5. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
Little Rock, AR 28-2-1 (17)
6. **CARL FROCH**
England 24-0 (20)
7. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 27-3-2 (17)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 27-1 (19)
9. **KAROLY BALZSAY**
Hungary 20-0 (14)
10. **DENIS INKIN**
Russia 34-1 (24)

Middleweights
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK
Youngstown, OH 35-1 (31)

1. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 28-0 (23)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 31-2-1 (13)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 30-3 (15)
4. **KHOREN GEVOR**
Armenia 30-3 (16)
5. **RANDY GRIFFIN**
Louisville, KY 24-2-3 (12)
6. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 37-12 (23)
7. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 62-8 (43)
8. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
Finland 25-2 (17)
9. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 20-0 (12)
10. **JOHN DUDDY**
Northern Ireland 26-0 (17)

Welterweights
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 46-5 (39)
2. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 33-1 (27)
3. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 37-6 (27)
4. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Ghana 35-2 (20)
5. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 48-3-2 (36)
6. **CARLOS QUINTANA**
Puerto Rico 26-2 (20)
7. **ANDRE BERTO**
Winter Haven, FL 24-0 (19)
8. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 29-4 (14)
9. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 37-6 (25)
10. **ISAAC HLATSWAYO**
South Africa 28-1-1 (10)

Jr. Welterweights
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 45-1 (32)

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
Palm Springs, CA 23-0 (11)
2. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 37-2-2 (22)
3. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
Ukraine 31-2-1 (13)
4. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
Brooklyn, NY 25-2 (5)
5. **JUAN URANGO**
Colombia 21-1-1 (16)
6. **KENDALL HOLT**
Paterson, NJ 25-2 (13)
7. **RICARDO TORRES**
Colombia 32-2 (28)
8. **HERMAN NGOUDJO**
Cameroon 17-3 (9)
9. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina 25-1 (24)
10. **NATE CAMPBELL**
Jacksonville, FL 33-5-1 (25)

Lightweights
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 50-4-1 (37)

1. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 34-2 (17)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Cuba 36-4-1 (22)
3. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 34-2-1 (17)
4. **JULIO DIAZ**
Mexico 36-4 (26)
5. **ANTONIO PITALUA**
Mexico 46-3 (40)
6. **ALI FUNEKA**
South Africa 30-2-2 (25)
7. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
Australia 24-2 (20)
8. **YURI ROMANOV**
Belarus 21-2 (14)
9. **BREIDIS PRESCOTT**
Colombia 21-0 (18)
10. **ANTHONY PETERSON**
Washington, DC 28-0 (19)

Jr. Lightweights
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 24-0 (24)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico 46-7-2 (29)
3. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
South Africa 36-3-1 (19)
4. **MZONKE FANA**
South Africa 28-4 (11)
5. **NICKY COOK**
England 29-1(16)
6. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 47-4-1 (34)
7. **URBANO ANTILLON**
Mexico 25-0 (18)
8. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico 21-0-1 (12)
9. **JORGE LINARES**
Venezuela 26-0 (17)
10. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
Gilroy, CA 23-1-1 (16)

Jr. Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Armenia 32-1-1 (26)
2. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 38-2-1 (28)
3. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
Mexico 36-4-2 (15)
4. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 32-3 (27)
5. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 12-1 (7)
6. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 26-4 (12)
7. **Z GORRES**
Philippines 28-2-2 (15)
8. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 51-5-1 (39)
9. **DIMITRI KIRILOV**
Russia 29-4-1 (9)
10. **KOHEI KONO**
Japan 22-4 (8)

Flyweights
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines 20-1 (13)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 34-2-3 (22)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 70-3-1 (37)
4. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
Thailand 46-1-1 (20)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 29-0-2 (18)
6. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 33-5-2 (15)
7. **JOSE LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 38-7-2 (32)
8. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 19-0 (12)
9. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 27-5-1 (20)
10. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
South Africa 22-2 (15)

Jr. Flyweights
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 32-0 (6)

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 28-1-2 (20)
2. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 34-5 (18)
3. **CESAR CANCHILA**
Colombia 27-1 (21)
4. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
Mexico 19-1-1 (15)
5. **JUANITO RUBILLAR**
Philippines 46-11-7 (22)
6. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 27-3-1 (11)
7. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 25-5-2 (14)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 23-2 (9)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina 18-1 (9)
10. **BERT BATAWANG**
Philippines 48-11-1 (36)

Strawweights
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua 23-0 (20)
2. **RAUL GARCIA**
Mexico 25-0-1 (15)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand 29-0 (12)
4. **FLORANTE CONDES**
Philippines 23-4-1 (20)
5. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 62-6-5 (31)
6. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 22-3 (9)
7. **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines 24-1-3 (14)
8. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
South Africa 19-0 (15)
9. **JUAN PALACIOS**
Nicaragua 25-2 (20)
10. **RONALD BARRERA**
Colombia 26-5-1 (16)

By Jeff Ryan

Off-Campus Grousing

Break out the No. 2 pencils and rinse off the mouthpiece. Nicolay Valuev recently opened a boxing school in his hometown of St. Petersburg, Russia. Now, while some skeptics might say that's like Naomi Campbell opening a charm school, we ought to stifle the wisecracks and give the Gene Tunney of torso turf some credit here. Valuev is obviously concerned that his sport has a healthy future. And if his school is a smashing success, Russians may occupy *every* spot in the heavyweight Top 10 one day. The mere thought of that probably makes his back hair stand on end.

Thus far, we're a little short on details regarding this institution of "hold-your-hands-higher" education. Like the cost of tuition, room and board, whether or not there will be a debate team, and the words to the school fight song (uh, no pun intended). All we know for sure is that with everybody learning how to deliver three-punch combinations, nobody will be stealing anybody else's milk money.

It's a shame that more fighters haven't shown "The Russian Giant's" initiative and opened their own learning centers. What's that, you say? There aren't enough good trainers out there to support them? Well, who said they have to be *boxing* schools? There are plenty of other possibilities out there. Some suggestions:

•**The Antonio Margarito School of Fine Arts:** "The Tijuana Tornado" and his trainer, Javier Capetillo, are quite proficient in the use of oil and watercolor, as evidenced by the paint job they did on Miguel Cotto. And Margarito has left plenty of other lasting images on canvas, as well. But it's Margarito's and Capetillo's imaginative work with plaster of paris that would create a flood of applications in the admissions office.

•**The Manny Pacquiao School of Political Science:** "Pac-Man" isn't just a teacher; he's also a doer. He plans to run for a congressional seat in his native Philippines in 2010. The world's best fighter, pound-for-pound, already has plenty of practice with politics. Just look at his negotiations for the De La Hoya and Hatton fights. Students would no doubt be inspired watching the school founder try to play the lead in *Mr. Pacquiao Goes To Manila.* And Pac-Man might as well run for something. He sure as heck doesn't run *from* anything.

•**The Floyd Mayweather Academy of Finance:** The school alma mater would be the old Bill Withers tune, "Lien On Me." The professors in these hallowed halls would use the "Pretty Boy" as an example of what not to do with one's money, like tip 500 percent on restaurant checks and literally throw cash around when you're being filmed for a documentary. Recently, the IRS filed a $6.1-million lien against Mayweather for unpaid taxes. Anyone who ever said

PHOTO BY IGOR KHAKIMOV/AFP/GETTY

Valuev puts one of his students through his paces

they admired Mayweather's form obviously wasn't referring to his tax return.

•**The Daniel Ponce De Leon School of Geography:** He could relate to his undergraduates the story of how one of his distant relatives, Juan, sailed in search of the Fountain of Youth in 1513. It wasn't until 2008 that it was actually discovered, by Bernard Hopkins.

•**The George Foreman School of Cooking:** Big George is perfect for this job. He gave plenty of opponents their just desserts during his career, and the grills he endorses have drained more unhealthy fat than a liposuction clinic in Beverly Hills. He's Chef Paul Prudhomme without the hat or Martha Stewart with bigger jugs. The only problem with the two-time heavyweight king is that he's getting up in age these days and doesn't always understand things clearly. It's easy to envision someone asking how to blacken a shrimp and him telling them to send Vic Darchinyan to a tanning salon.

•**The Evander Holyfield Institute for Historical Studies:** Talk about old school. Professor Holyfield wouldn't just teach history, he'd relate his role in it. Abe Lincoln? "The Real Deal" hired him as a sparring partner back in 1845 when he was trying to overcome his difficulty with tall fighters. Where was Holyfield when JFK was shot? Applying for Social Security. When people call Holyfield a dinosaur, they mean that literally. The first knockdown he ever suffered was at the hands of a brontosaurus. And the music accompanying his walk to the ring for his first title bout? A Gregorian chant.

•**The Wladimir Klitschko Bodybuilding Academy:** The top-ranked heavyweight recently graced the cover of *Muscle & Fitness* magazine. James Toney, who made the cover of *Flab & High Cholesterol*, would probably want to open his own school, but accreditation might be tough to secure.

•**The Paulie Malignaggi Beauty School:** Students would learn how to weave braided hair extensions into their scalp because everyone wants their mane to look like the beaded room dividers in a Chinese restaurant.

•**The Jim Lampley School of Grammar:** Just think of how the HBO wordsmith could captivate the lecture hall by waxing poetic. That would be almost as enthralling as the owner of the Valuev Boxing School waxing his upper body. Professor Lampley would prove particularly valuable in pumping up his students' vocabularies as though they were on steroids. He'd explain that "pro bono" doesn't have anything to do with being a fan of U2 and "academia" isn't an Eastern European country that has produced two junior bantamweight champions.

"We have encountered the cessation of our educational colloquy," Lamps would say when the bell rang at the end of class. Ah, music to the ears.

•**The Shane Mosley Chemistry Lab:** "Sugar Shanes'" physique would make for a good classroom exhibit at the Margarito School of Fine Arts, specifically as an example of perfect sculpting. But Mosley would better serve the next generation of great minds if he taught them how performance-enhancing drugs interact in the human body. One danger is that some students might fail a pop quiz and then, like Mosley, try to claim that, gee wiz, they didn't know what they were taking.

There you have it, plenty of fine schools from which to choose. Wonderful curriculums, great extracurriculars, dedicated faculties, cute chicks sunning themselves on the lawn outside the library. There's no "party school," per se, but anywhere Ricky Hatton turned up would probably earn that designation pretty quickly. The only thing we still need is a group of campus protestors to stage peaceful sit-ins when things don't go their way. But where can we find a group of pacifists who wouldn't dare raise a fist in anger? Wait a second. The U.S. Olympic Boxing Team would be perfect! ■

PHOTO BY ANITA BUGGE/WIREIMAGE

Raise your arms if you want a body like Wladimir's

By Ivan Goldman

"Margarito Knew—He Had To Know"

This isn't baseball, where steroid cheats like Alex Rodriguez are merely reprehensible. This is boxing, where weasels like Antonio Margarito and his Rasputin, Javier Capetillo, can kill a guy with their damn loaded gloves. Mike Tyson biting off a piece of Evander Holyfield's ear was a silly misunderstanding compared to this.

Of course everyone understands hand-wrapper-in-chief Capetillo lied when he told the California commission it was all an "innocent mistake" when he "accidentally" loaded both of his fighter's wraps before his bout with Sugar Shane Mosley. But Margarito's claim that he knew nothing about what was or wasn't in his wraps is no more believable than Capetillo's. Ask people who've actually *worn* wraps into the

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

With loaded gloves, even a glancing blow like this could have seriously injured Mosley

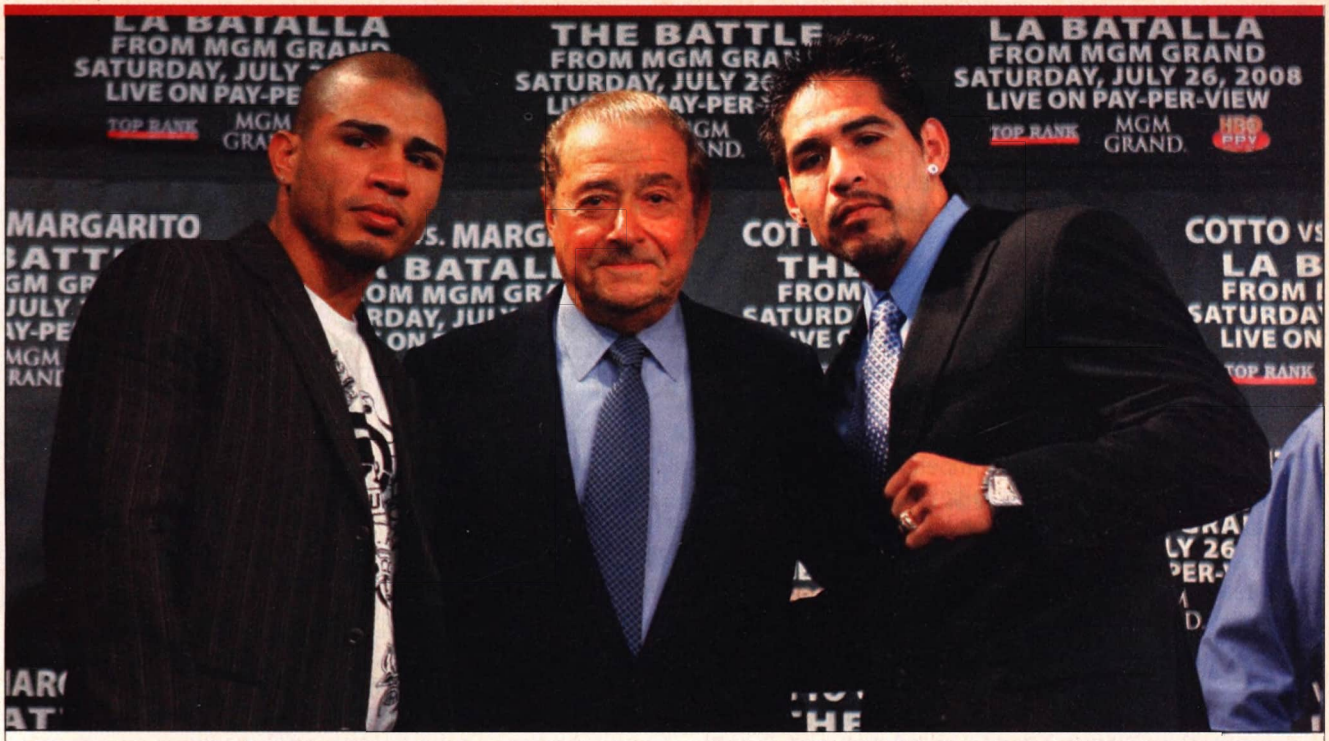


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Has Arum forgotten he also promotes Cotto?

ring. It's easier to believe O.J. was innocent.

"Margarito knew. He had to know," said James Wimberly, an ex-welter who produces Rich Marotta's "Neutral Corner" on KLAC Radio in Los Angeles. "You watch the guy when he wraps your hand. You can feel it when it's wrapped right, and you can feel it when it's not wrapped right. You start punching your palm with your wrapped hand. Everybody does. Margarito knew."

John Frierson, one of seven commissioners who voted unanimously to revoke the licenses of both men, agreed that it's impossible for Margarito not to have known "unless he's stupid, and Margarito's not stupid." Frierson, who boxed in the amateurs, is probably the only voting commissioner who's ever actually worn wraps. And he informed me that if any fighter licensed in California goes down to Mexico or anywhere else to fight Margarito, that fighter could find a chilly reception next time he wants to compete north of the border.

It is unlikely Capetillo will ever be re-licensed, but Margarito may slither back into the game when he applies in one year. Lifetime bans, not one-year suspensions, are warranted. Also, the Los Angeles District Attorney should consider prosecuting both men for criminal conspiracy. Possibly a third person was detailed to distract inspectors. If inspectors from different states who've supervised Margarito's wraps sat down together and compared notes, they might find some common threads.

Throwing gasoline on this stinking fire was Bob Arum, Margarito's promoter. Directing his anger at the whistleblowers instead of the perpetrators, he declared he'd never stage another card in California as long as his fighter

Even legal wraps help a fighter punch harder

remained under suspension. The message to all the other commissions was clear: *Turn the other way when our sinister characters commit these atrocities or we'll punish you for your diligence.*

I commend Bob for his bright idea. With all due respect, I hope he'll do us all a favor by keeping his promise and staying the hell out of California. I'd rather have no boxing at all than see it run the way he wants it run.

But after he had time to cool off, I imagine Arum recalled that out in casino country the big bosses are hunkered down and no longer so eager to sponsor boxing shows. Until the world pulls itself out of the economic mud, the fight future lies in places where fans actually live—places like California. Even if Arum forgets this, his competition won't.

Arum the Torch also tried to spark a racial blaze when he declared heatedly, "If this was anyone other than a Mexican kid, there'd be a different result." That would be an interesting theory if a majority of the commissioners weren't of black or Mexican extraction, which they are.

At the hearing, California Deputy Attorney General Karen Chappelle attempted to introduce a claim that Margarito wore the same loaded pads over his knuckles when he stopped Miguel Cotto last July in Las Vegas. The commission stopped Chappelle from continuing on the grounds that the point wasn't germane to events in California. One can only conclude that whatever she was about to say didn't interest Arum. That's odd because he also promotes Cotto, who stated flatly that fighters "know if there's something in their handwraps or not."

Margarito has a reputation around the gym circuit as a vicious sparring partner, a bone-breaker who treats gym practice like war. Were his gloves loaded even in the gym? You tell me. The man doesn't punch correctly. He pushes shots, doesn't snap them. They're wide, usually slow. They defy the physics of the Sweet Science. But they bust guys up anyway.

Keith Kizer, executive director of the Nevada commission, tried to shield his bureaucratic butt by contending there's no way Margarito wore illegal wraps against Cotto. His see-no-evil stance could also be interpreted as an invitation to con men and cheats everywhere to hold their dirty shows in Nevada if they find all those silly safety rules too constricting. This is precisely what happened after one of Mike Tyson's out-of-the-ring explosions. After some commissions said enough is enough, bottom-feeding commissions competed to attract his ongoing nervous breakdown to their states. But if casinos don't put up the cash, it doesn't matter how deeply Kizer curtsies to promoters. They still won't come.

How dangerous is it to face a man with plaster or a plaster-like substance over his knuckles? I asked Dr. Michael Schwartz, Connecticut ringside physician. "It could have been a catastrophe," he replied.

The four knuckles in a fist, he explained, are "four things that are separate." Wrapping them "stabilizes them and creates the ability to deliver a harder punch without injuring the hand." So the presence of plaster over the knuckles would be dangerous, according to Schwartz, not just because it's hitting a person with a hard substance, but because it "stabilizes everything even more. Therefore, the force of the blow can be increased."

Anyone guilty of such a transgression, Schwartz said, should be barred for life and criminal prosecution ought to be considered. Amen. As I said, you can kill a guy that way.

How long has this been going on? Years ago, when I reported for *The Denver Post*, I wrote about a Colorado convict who'd raped approximately 50 women in the Boulder area, all at gunpoint. When police arrested him in the act, his revolver was loaded. He claimed that all the other times his revolver was empty. Do you believe him?

It's of course ironic that the alleged tampering occurred before Margarito went out to fight Mosley, who under oath in 2003 told a grand jury he'd innocently injected himself in the stomach repeatedly with the endurance-enhancing steroid EPO before his September 13, 2003, rematch with Oscar De La Hoya.

A lot of people in boxing have gone easy on Mosley because he's such a nice guy. But when a nice guy puts a

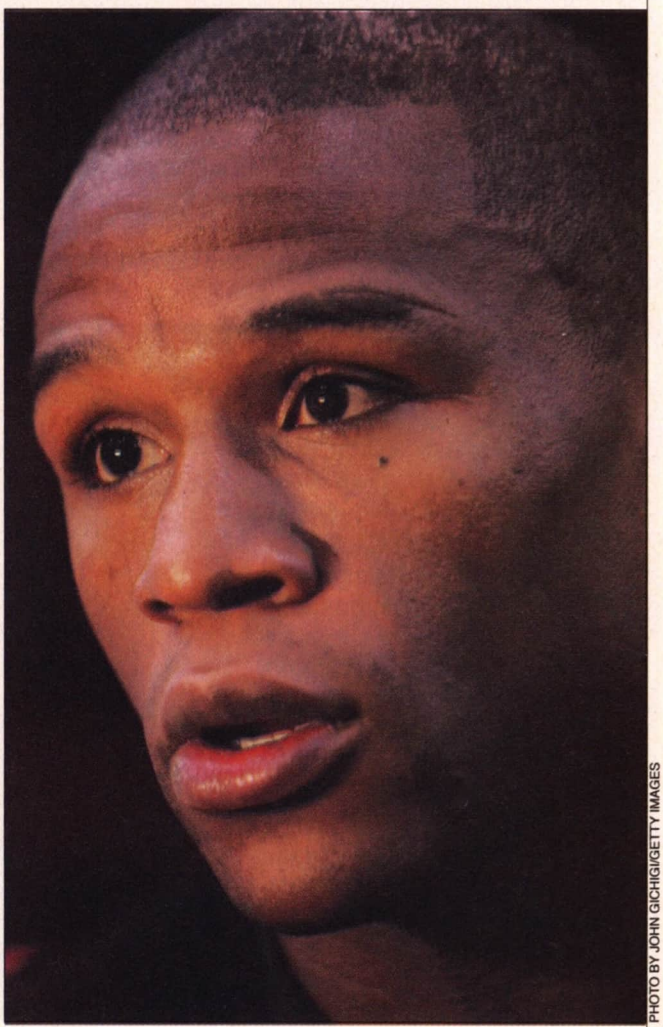


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Legacy-enhancing matches await Mayweather

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Guerrero: Back in action ... but only briefly

horseshoe in his glove, he's not being terribly nice, is he? Illegal steroid use is a close cousin of loaded gloves, and there are no excuses. Give Yankee third baseman Alex Rodriguez credit for telling the truth at last.

Mayweather Sequel: After a pugilist hangs up his gloves, it's bad form to ask him to change his mind. He knows his body and how it's reacting to the punishment. Anyone else can only speculate.

So I'm not advising Floyd Mayweather, who retired last year at the tender age of 31, to get back in the ring. But allow me to point out what it could do for his reputation should he return to face either Mosley or Manny Pacquiao in a superfight (because they're both superfights).

The beauty of it lies in the fact that it probably makes poor financial sense. Because Mayweather left $20-million on the table with Oscar, his taking what promises to be a harder fight with Mosley or Pacquiao yanks the rug out under anyone who contends "Pretty Boy" looked for a soft touch. He'd be doing it, as Peter O'Toole's *Lawrence of Arabia* said to Anthony Quinn: "Because it is his pleasure."

Floyd's go-betweens already said no to Mosley and left the door open a crack for Pacquiao, but I'm guessing Floyd is getting a little bored with strip clubs and zooming room to room on his motorized scooter. An enhanced legacy waits for him. I'm just saying.

No More! Enough of these cheap undercards. When promoters attract a big audience, they should use it well. Take Mosley vs. Margarito, for example. The 20,820 fans witnessed not just a cheap undercard, but also a stupid one. The co-feature had Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero matched against Edel Ruiz, who'd lost seven of his last nine. Ruiz lasted 43 seconds.

Crowd-pleasing Guerrero, incidentally, hadn't competed for 11 months. Why so long? Possibly because his manager, Shelly Finkel, likes to gather all his fighters under the canopy of one promoter, which these days is Golden Boy. After months of arbitration, Guerrero cut all ties with Goossen-Tutor, Finkel claimed. Trouble is, the California commission didn't quite agree. Because of untidy legal issues, his ex-promoter may still own a piece. One has to wonder whether all this wrangling pays off. Maybe it does for Finkel.

Super Magoo: To Arum for the sickening behavior cited above and to alphabet overlord Jose Sulaiman, who figures that whatever goes inside a fighter's gloves is somebody else's concern.

Magoo: Gary Shaw again, for likening Nonito Donaire to a dog and Jorge Arce to a chicken. Trash talk from fighters is unpleasant. From a promoter, it's vile.

Rest In Peace: Chuck Bodak, 92, dexterous cutman, smart trainer, a truly generous, all-around good guy who made shooting the breeze an art form. ■

Ivan Goldman's boxing-based novel* The Barfighter *will be published in April by The Permanent Press.

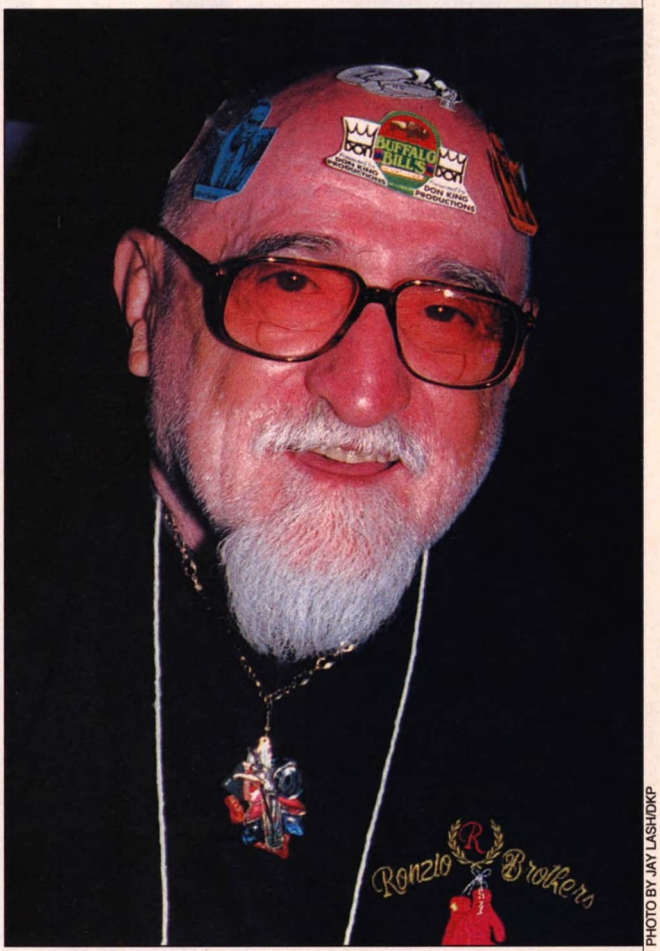


PHOTO BY JAY LASH/DKP

Good-guy Bodak will be missed

[Camera Clicks]

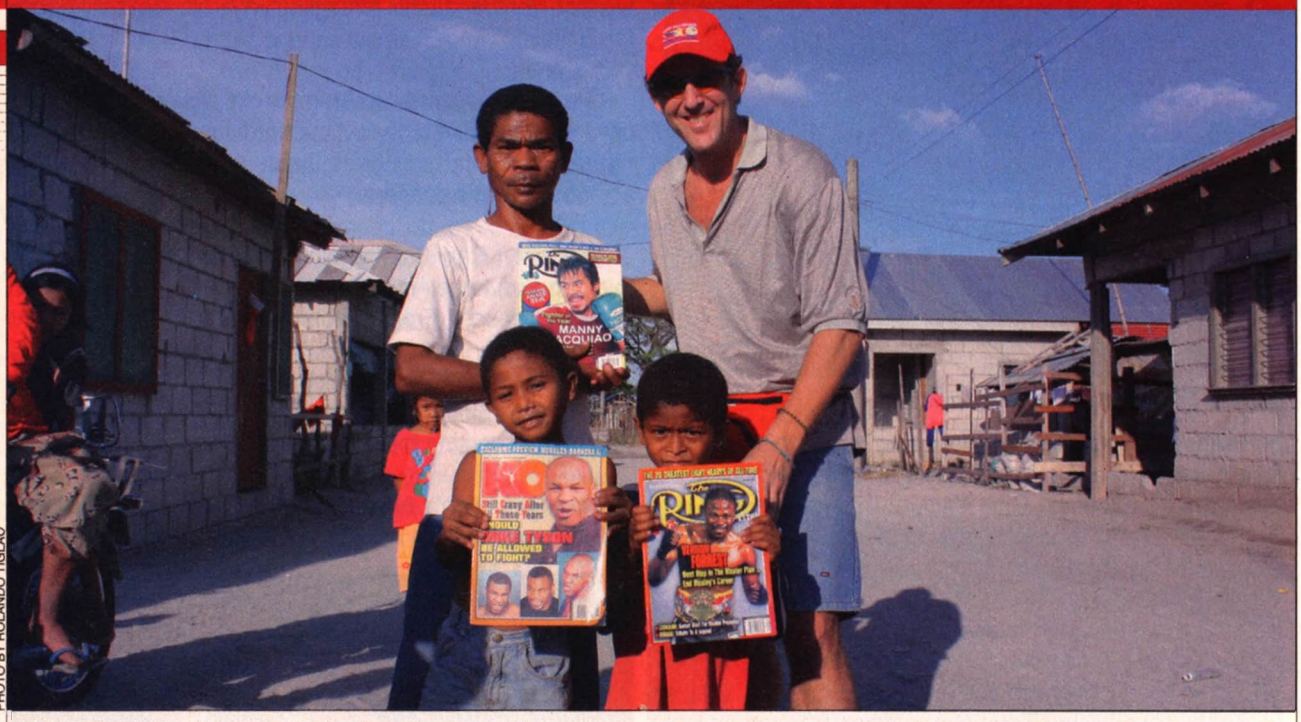


PHOTO BY ROLANDO TIGLAO

THE RING's Ted Lerner returned to the Aeta village where he watched the Manny Pacquiao-Oscar De La Hoya fight at the home of Arthur Sumilang, who is seen holding a copy of the March 2009 issue of THE RING, featuring "Pac-Man" on the cover. The two young fellows holding magazines are Sangoku Saplala (left) and Ponkan Delfrado, who were also featured in Lerner's original piece about the Philippines' indigenous tribal people.

PHOTO BY ADAM IHSE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Swede hereafter: A scene from the funeral of former heavyweight champion Ingemar Johansson, who died in January at the age of 76. The pallbearers on the right side of the casket were reportedly extra careful, in case there was one last reflex movement remaining in Johansson's famous "Hammer Of Thor."

PHOTO BY SERGEI SUPINSKY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

You would think that with all of the advances in modern audio technology, nobody would have to use a bullhorn anymore, but Vitali Klitschko recently decided to go all Harvey Milk on us and rally a crowd of protesters in Kiev, Ukraine, with this antiquated voice-projection equipment. After this political rally, Klitschko proceeded to call his mother from a payphone, and then he listened to some 8-track tapes on the car ride home.

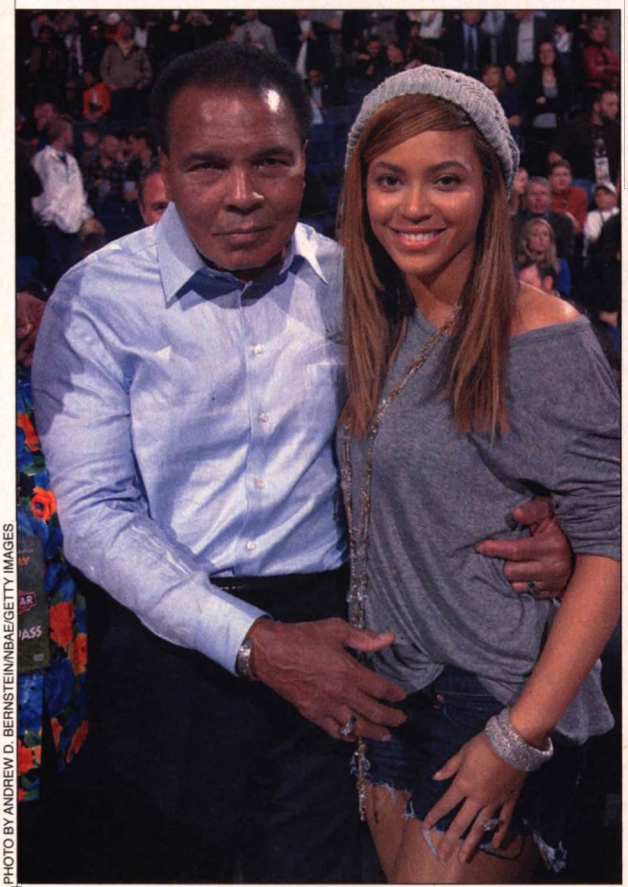


PHOTO BY ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES

If ever there was a time when Muhammad Ali could boast, "I'm so pretty," and it could look like a relative falsehood, this is it. Standing next to R&B diva Beyonce Knowles, well, sorry champ, but you're not all that pretty. Ali and Beyonce met up at the NBA All-Star Game in Phoenix in February, where, despite what this photo may suggest, "The Greatest" did a good job of not letting his hands wander anywhere inappropriate.

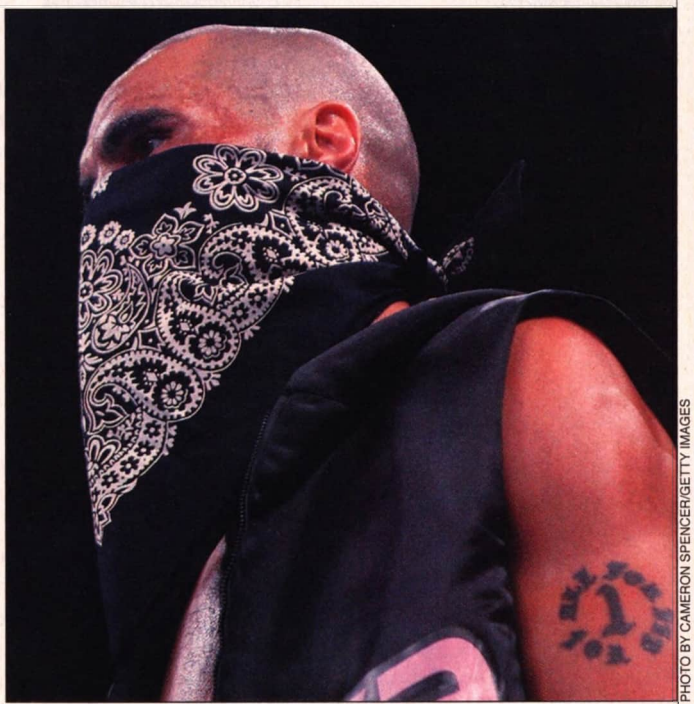


PHOTO BY CAMERON SPENCER/GETTY IMAGES

Anthony Mundine looks like he's dressed for an old-fashioned stickup—which is appropriate since fans in Wollongong, Australia, handed over their money for nothing when Mundine fought used-up, undersized Shannan Taylor in a total mismatch in February. Mundine won every round on every card to post his 12th consecutive victory, but it could have been worse; Mundine could have faced Aaron Ryan, who fought on the undercard and fell to 0-10 with 10 knockout losses.

By Joseph Santoliquito
PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Tor Hamer Heavyweight

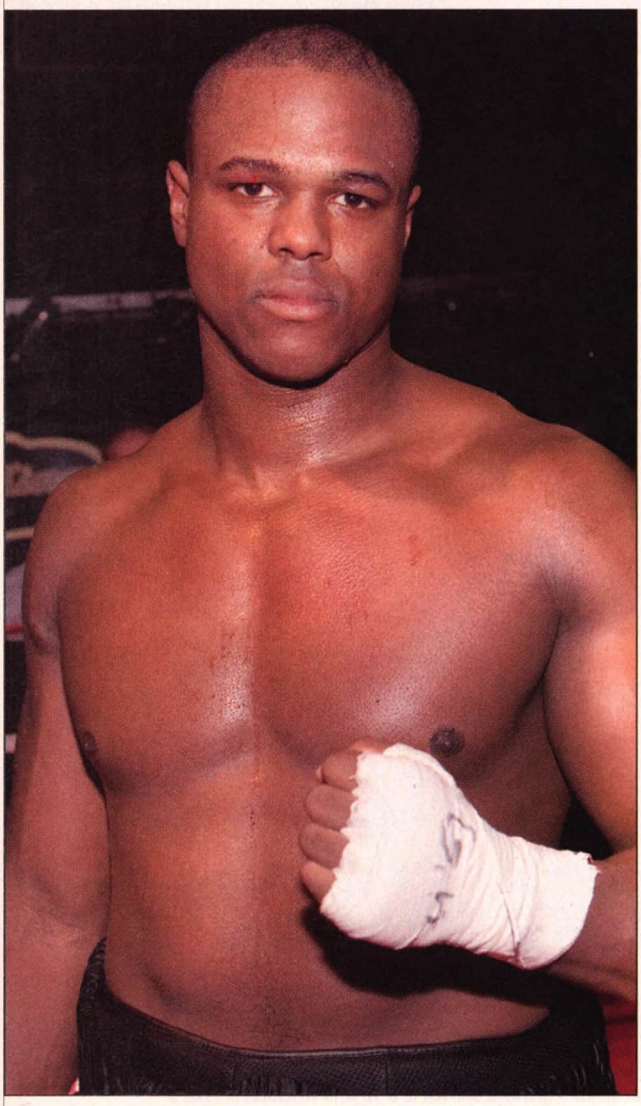
Pro Record

2008		
Oct. 22	Joseph Rabotte, New York City, NY	KO 2
Dec. 4	Royal Bryant, New York City	KO 1
2009		
Jan. 17	Darion Moss, Biloxi, MS	KO 2
Feb. 25	Clarence Tillman, New York City	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
4	4	0	0	4

The atmosphere was certainly comforting, with a gentle breeze wafting through the quaint Peruvian restaurant where Tor Hamer sat with his father, Dr. Irving Hamer, in Miami, Florida's Little Havana. The conversation at the table, however, was far from breezy.

There were a few fist pounds that rattled the silverware as Tor thundered away about this new idea of his, telling his father he wanted to go to the Olympics in 2008—in of all sports, boxing. The problem was that his father wasn't taking him seriously. He sat there stoically, deadpanning his only child's designs of glory. Then he singed Tor's plans—questioning his commitment, his willingness to wake up at five in the morning and run, calling him a "dilettante."



The then 21-year-old Tor loved hanging out with friends, with girls, throwing down a beer or two. He loved working out, maintaining that hard image of a fighter, but without the sacrifice and dedication that actually went into becoming a fighter. More or less, he was more a wannabe than a real boxer.

Tor never beat his father in anything—except this one time, he did. The 26-year-old is now 4-0 (4) as a professional and has what appears a sparkling future ahead. He has everything in place: Lou DiBella as his promoter, trainers Shawn Raysor and Bob Miles, and, most importantly, his indomitable spirit and steely will.

Hamer also has the assurance that if his boxing career fails to bear fruit, he can always fall back on his Penn State degree in business science, with aspirations of going into green tech (alternative energies). Still, it's quite remarkable that Hamer got this far, especially with his family background.

His father earned a master's degree in educational administration and a doctorate in learning environments and social policy at Harvard University. His mother, Barbara, has a master's degree from New York University in public health administration.

What is the 6'2", 225-pound Tor doing studying the Sweet Science?

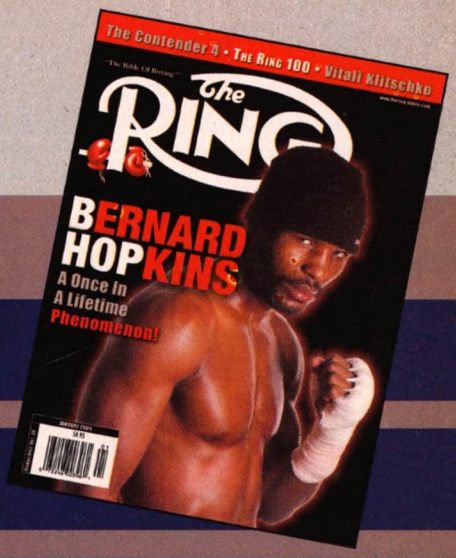
"That's a good question," the personable Hamer said. "Boxing is really the culmination of a lot of things that went into stemming aggression issues I had when I was younger. It began with martial arts, and when my parents divorced, I lived with my mother in Baltimore and attended a private school. I was basically this black kid in an all-white school, and I was getting into trouble. I started acting out. It was an adjustment for me.

"I always had an appetite for altercations. There was something there, I can't pinpoint it, but there was something. I covered the spectrum. I was part bully, a strong young man not giving in when antagonized, and there were times when people tried bullying me, and I didn't back down. I had my share of each. Boxing redirects my demons. Now my demons have real use; I've found a way to create value for my demons. Otherwise, they're just a liability."

Hamer's introduction into boxing came almost by happenstance. By the time he was in his late teens, he had

(Continued on Page 108)

The RING



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Another Golden Oldie

THE RESURRECTION OF SUGAR SHANE MOSLEY

By Ivan Goldman

Sugar Shane Mosley's action-packed destruction of methodical mauler Antonio Margarito will reverberate through the sport for a long time to come. In many ways it was a great night, but it was also an apt example of yin-yang, the ancient Chinese principle that dictates every quality has an opposing element that makes up the whole. After light comes darkness.

Was it a magnificent event? Yes. And viewed by a fantastic record-breaking crowd that witnessed a beautiful performance by a popular, much-respected pugilist of tremendous talent who vaulted to the top of the welterweight division and back into the pound-for-pound list (at number six). But the other side of the event was despair, disappointment, scandal, and hypocrisy.

The defeated Margarito, 37-6 (27), had within the last year or so become the most popular active Mexican fighter in the world, a man who could claim the hallowed mantle once worn by revered Julio Cesar Chavez. A courageous fighter of indomitable will, he was also known as a terrifically hard worker in the gym and an all-around good guy, a humble man of the people with one foot on either side of the border with a reverse twist. Unlike so many Mexican fighters who were born in Mexico and moved to the U.S., he was born in Torrance, California, and raised in Tijuana.

It was Margarito who pulled in the lion's share of the 20,820 fans. They bought up every available seat in the Staples

Mosley unloads the final barrage of the fight, knocking Margarito into the ropes in the ninth round, just as the "Tijuana Tornado's" corner throws the white towel of surrender into the ring. Sugar Shane's upset victory has rejuvenated his career and returned him to the pound-for-pound ratings.

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

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THE MUHAMMAD ALI STORY
BY JOSÉ TORRES
WITH
BERT RANDOLPH SUGAR

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PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Mosley got off first and often as soon as the bout began. He made excellent use of his left jab, keeping Margarito at range and setting him up for the numerous right hands that inevitably followed.

Center even though most of them understood that the promoters were presenting not much of an undercard. They laid their money down for what promised to be a great main event, and they did it during the worst economic downturn since men wore spats. Give them a good fight and they want to be there, even if, like this one, they could watch it at home on HBO.

The day before the fight, grim economic numbers were released showing the state's unemployment rate at a staggering 9.3 percent. Earlier, Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer said he expected "seven or eight, maybe ten thousand" fans, but tickets sold so fast that the venue switched plans and opened the upper decks. It was the largest crowd ever to gather in the 10-year-old venue, home of the NBA's Lakers and Clippers and many a rock and pop concert.

But Margarito will not be attracting big crowds again anytime soon. Seventeen days after his defeat, the California State Athletic Commission voted 7-0 to revoke the license of Margarito and chief cornerman Javier Capetillo because a pair of illegal knucklepads were found hidden in his wraps before the fight. The ruling means that Margarito and Capetillo are banned from participating in boxing in the United States for at least one year, providing other state commissions honor the license revocations, which is usually the case. After a year, they may reapply for their licenses in California, but there is no guarantee either will be re-licensed.

Margarito has suffered something far more serious than one kayo defeat and the ability to fight in the U.S. for a year. The scandal has clouded previous victories that included his kayos of Kermit Cintron (twice), Miguel Cotto, and Sergio Martinez.

Bob Arum, Margarito's promoter, said Capetillo "got what he deserved," but was incensed by Margarito's punishment and vowed he would challenge it in court. While Arum's plans for a June 13 rematch between Margarito and Cotto have evaporated, the promoter said, "We'll figure out a fight for him in Mexico."

Yin-yang was everywhere that night. The victory at Staples went to one of the nicest, most dedicated

fighters in the game. But Sugar Shane was much closer to the end of his career than its start. In box-office terms, a tremendously popular 30-year-old was defeated by a 37-year-old lesser draw.

Only a month earlier, the unsavory aroma from Mosley's previous relationship with the now-defunct, steroid-dispensing BALCO firm wafted once more over the transom. Transcripts from Mosley's 2003 grand jury testimony became public, revealing that under oath he'd admitted to injecting himself in the stomach with the notorious doping agent EPO before his September 13, 2003, rematch with Oscar De La Hoya. He maintains he was unaware at the time that he was using an illegal substance.

Savvy trainer Naazim Richardson, who helped Mosley craft his victory over Margarito, was there in place of Shane's father, Jack, who'd trained him for more than two decades. Jin Mosley was no longer there as his manager, and, as we later learned, no longer his wife.

Fans were delighted to see iconic Michael Buffer back from cancer surgery to intone his traditional call for a rumble, but across town another beloved boxing figure, former junior lightweight titleholder Genaro Hernandez, was at age 42, battling his own rare form of cancer.

Fans know Mosley comes to fight. He moves, but he doesn't run. Yet he's never been a big draw by himself. To gather a crowd, he needs a popular opponent like De La Hoya, Fernando Vargas, or Margarito.

"Fighters are taking risks," said Mosley business partner and two-division former champion Bernard Hopkins, age 44. "Promoters are taking risks. You gotta put on good fights in a bad economy." Another such fight took place the night old man Hopkins won every round against previously undefeated young lion Kelly Pavlik.

It's not all about age, Mosley said, pointing out that Vargas, at age 30, felt his body couldn't take any more and

"It Had Dried Up Blood On It"

Commissions spell out precisely how a fighter's hands must be wrapped. Naazim Richardson, who studied those rules, oversaw the wrapping of Antonio Margarito's hands for Shane Mosley's corner. Serving as Bernard Hopkins' trainer in September 2001, he got the New York commission to order Felix Trinidad's seconds to rewrap his hands because they were "layering the wraps using tape, gauze, then more tape, more gauze. That makes a cast out of it," Richardson said.

As he watched trainer Javier Capetillo wrap Margarito, he noticed "too much tape down the wrists. That's against the rules. When I pointed it out, the [inspector] told him to stop right there."

"Margarito's guy said, 'We expected this from you.' I said, 'I expect you to follow the rules.' I said, 'Listen, I trust my brother, but when he hands me money, I count it.' When he took off the wraps and started again, he wrapped it the same way again. He thought I'd get tired of correcting him." But Richardson got another ruling in his favor.

When the hand was wrapped a third time, Richardson said, "I asked to feel the wraps. I felt something really hard" outside the knuckles. "I showed it to the guy from the Commission. We squeezed it and this thing fell out. Right away the doctor said that looks just like the plaster they make casts out of." The substance, Richardson said, was wrapped in gauze. "You could see it was old and had been used before. It had dried up blood on it."

Richardson said the inspector protested when he demanded to re-examine the other hand. "He said, 'I already okayed that one.'" Richardson prevailed, and said an identical substance fell from the other wraps. Altogether, the left hand was wrapped three times and the right hand twice. Also, Margarito was made to wash his hands before the last wrapping.

Richardson kept the substance and at first refused to hand it to the Commission. "I said I'm giving this to Shane Mosley's lawyer. The lawyer finally came over, and he said to put it in a box, and the Commission took it as evidence."

—I.G.

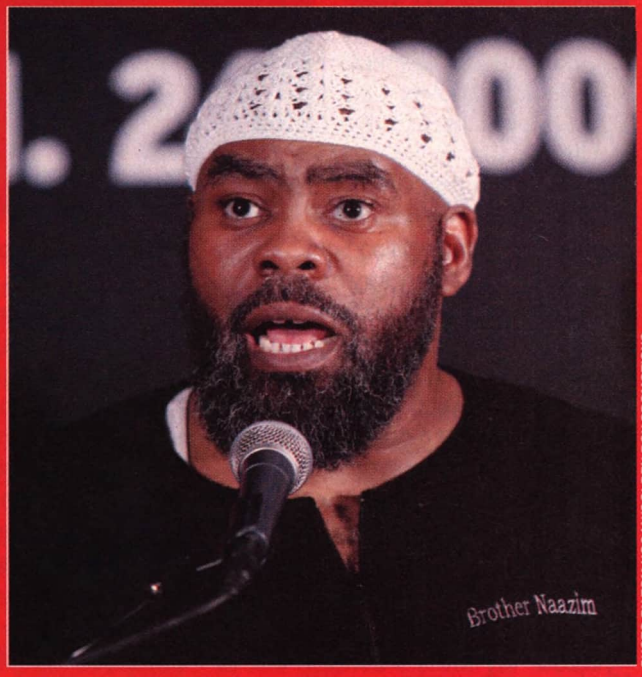


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Richardson spills the beans

retired, yet Mosley felt like his body could go another three years or more.

Few fighters, young or old, can fight at Mosley's pace over the distance. Margarito's principal weapon was considered his relentless attack, and the fact that no matter what you hit him with, he just keeps coming for as long as it takes. When Sugar Shane came out strong in the early rounds, sticking and moving, making Margarito miss and making him pay, you had to wonder how long he could keep that up. He didn't look like a man pacing himself. He was, round after round, putting it all out there. But Margarito got pounded out of commission before Mosley could tire out. And from the looks of him that night, Sugar could have gone another seven or eight rounds without complaint.

Mosley, 46-5 (39), has won seven of his last eight outings against tough competition. This includes kayos of Margarito, Ricardo Mayorga, and Vargas (twice) and decisions over Luis Collazo, Jose Luis Cruz, and David Estrada. In his one loss, he fought well against powerful Cotto, who earned the decision in an exciting bout.

Mosley scored repeatedly with his right hand throughout the bout (below), but as Margarito faded and Sugar Shane began connecting with thunderous left hooks (opposite page), the fight was over. Not even the supposedly granite-chinned Margarito could withstand such a sustained pounding.

PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

Mosley has been saying he now wants only big fights, no tuneups. His career has shown this is not just rhetoric. Schaefer said he'd immediately get in touch with undefeated Floyd Mayweather and try to coax him out of retirement. That would be a huge event.

The talent-laden welterweight division, the most dangerous in the sport, is loaded with huge potential matchups. As Arum pointed out, it's a tough division to dominate. Cotto has lost to Margarito, Margarito has lost to Mosley and Paul Williams, Williams is 1-1 against Carlos Quintana, Joshua Clottey remains plenty dangerous, and Andre Berto is undefeated and hungry. Any potential match for number one pound-for-pound Manny Pacquiao is huge, and he already dipped his toe into the division once when he went up two divisions from lightweight to destroy De La Hoya. Moreover, if number-one welter Mosley faces number-two Cotto again, the winner would be awarded the vacant RING championship.

Going into his February 14 fight with Argentine Sergio Martinez for an interim junior middleweight alphabet strap, former IBF welterweight titleholder Cintron was in position to redeem himself. Had he won, he could have claimed his two losses to Margarito were marred by chicanery. But Cintron was extremely lucky to escape with a majority draw in a bout that the vast majority of observers thought Martinez clearly won.

Mosley-Margarito was one of those stellar events that drew the Hollywood set and politicians along with rock-solid fans ignoring the damaged economy. Gov. Arnold

Schwarzenegger, whose state treasury was on the verge of issuing IOUs to employees and creditors, was roundly booed, possibly because he was ringside instead of trying to fix the broken budget.

Though native Southern Californian Mosley was not their favorite, the fans saw nothing in the ring to quarrel with. Color-blind Mosley, who never talks trash and gives his fights everything he's got, had their respect. "A lot of people would say I'm really half-Mexican," he said, "because I grew up in California" sparring many Latinos who, he said, taught him first-hand the value of a spirited body attack.

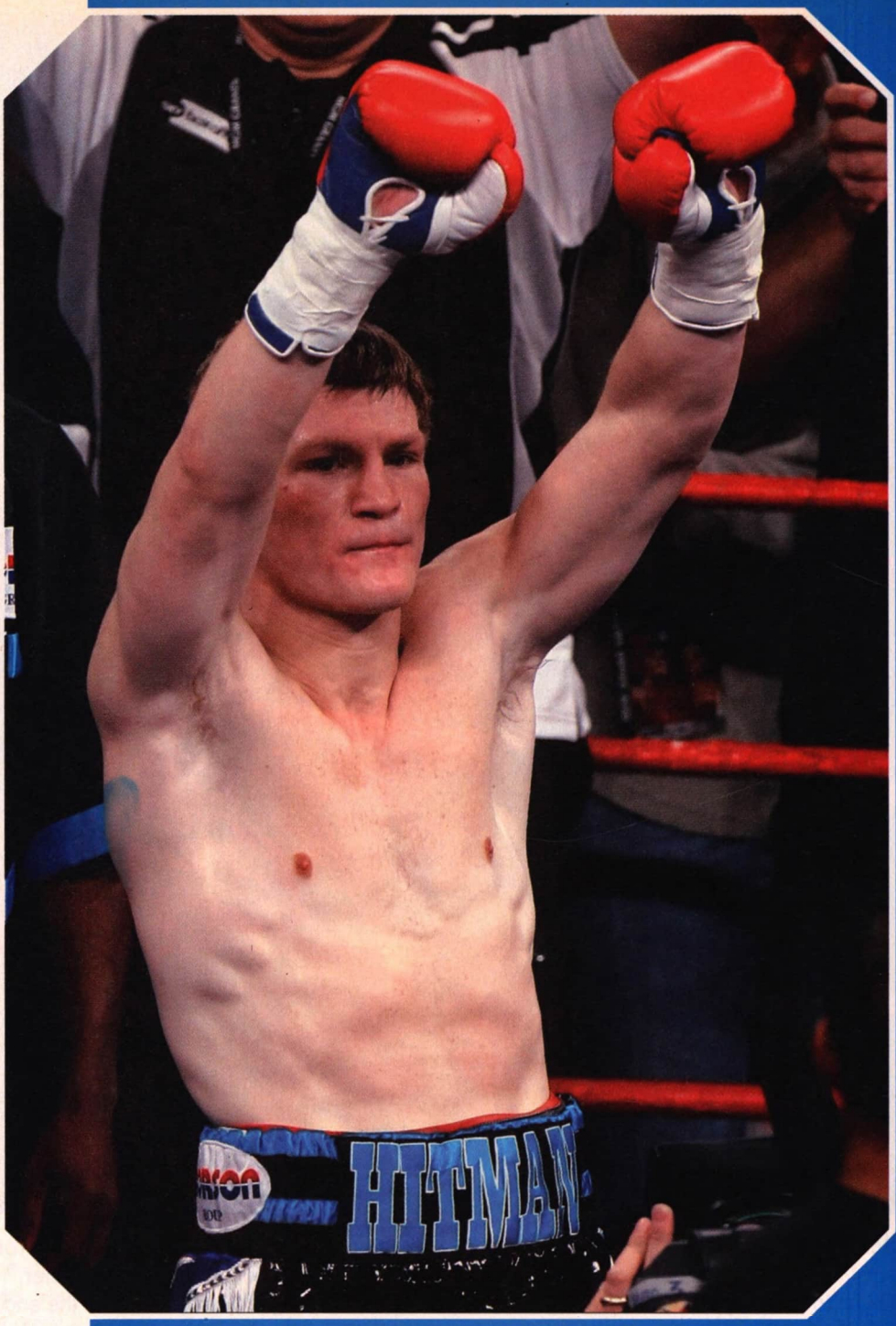
Fans saw Mosley steadily break down Margarito, getting there first round after round, countering beautifully, mixing up his punches, and beating the taller man inside and outside, to the gut and to the head. His big right hands found a home all night, and more than a few landed as the bell ended a round. Evidently Sugar Shane keeps a 10-second clock in his head.

By round eight, Mosley couldn't seem to miss, and Margarito started stumbling off-balance. Shane chased him from one side of the ring to the other, finally knocking him down at the end of the round. Margarito looked weak when he came out for the ninth, and 43 seconds into it, referee Raul Caiz Sr. stepped in to save him from more brutal combinations.

Margarito made no excuses, simply saying, "I just kept getting caught."

During and before the fight. ■

Ivan Goldman, The Ring's West Coast correspondent, was ringside at the Staples Center for Mosley-Margarito.



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GREAT UNEXPECTATIONS

Will Conventional Wisdom Again Get Shot Down In Hatton vs. Pacquiao?

PHOTOS BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

By Eric Raskin

It all seems so obvious now. Of course 42-year-old Bernard Hopkins was going to go all Benjamin Button on us, recapture his youth, and make poor Kelly Pavlik dance like his own personal marionette. Of course Manny Pacquiao, a one-time flyweight titlist, was going to toy with Oscar De La Hoya, a one-time middleweight titlist. Of course Shane Mosley, who could barely summon the strength to get past punching-bag-to-the-stars Ricardo Mayorga one fight earlier, was going to dominate and knock out the iron-chinned Antonio Margarito.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

While Pacquiao is indeed quicker than Hatton, so was Paul Malignaggi, and the junior welterweight champion didn't have any problem hitting the New Yorker. Timing can beat speed, and Hatton's timing was good enough to be a major factor in his 11th-round TKO of the speedy Malignaggi.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Judging by the way Pacquiao hammered De La Hoya into a TKO defeat in their welterweight match, it would be stupid to think that "Pac-Man's" punches couldn't hurt junior welter Hatton. The fact that the Filipino was once a flyweight is no longer relevant.

In retrospect, it's a wonder that Roy Jones didn't expose Joe Calzaghe and Hasim Rahman didn't flatten Wladimir Klitschko. Those results would have fit in perfectly with what we've been seeing lately in major fights.

It's not so much a matter of the underdogs winning. Yes, Hopkins, Pacquiao, and Mosley were all underdogs, but we're talking 8-5, 2-1, maybe 5-2, odds like that. The stunner was how they won. There wasn't a round you could score for Pavlik, De La Hoya, or Margarito. It was assumed that if those underdogs prevailed, they'd do so on points, but two of them went ahead and scored knockouts and the third probably would have if he'd had one more round to work with.

The notion of a fight proving conventional wisdom wrong is nothing new. That it's been happening so frequently of late, however, should have us questioning whether we really know anything at all. You always hear people trot out the "styles make fights" cliché to explain how they could have been so wrong, but rarely does anyone tell you before a fight exactly how the styles will impact that particular pairing. That's because no two fighters are exactly the same, no exact style matchup has been played out before (unless it's a rematch), and until the boxers enter the ring, nobody really knows how one man's weaknesses will play into another man's strengths.

As a result, fans and experts alike should be second-guessing everything they think they know. With the first true superfight of 2009, Ricky Hatton vs. Pacquiao, fast approaching, maybe we should be kicking dirt on top of conventional wisdom in order to come up with the real answers.

In that spirit, here are 10 statements about Hatton-Pacquiao that represent conventional wisdom, accompanied by the counter-arguments that, based on recent trends, might just more accurately represent reality.

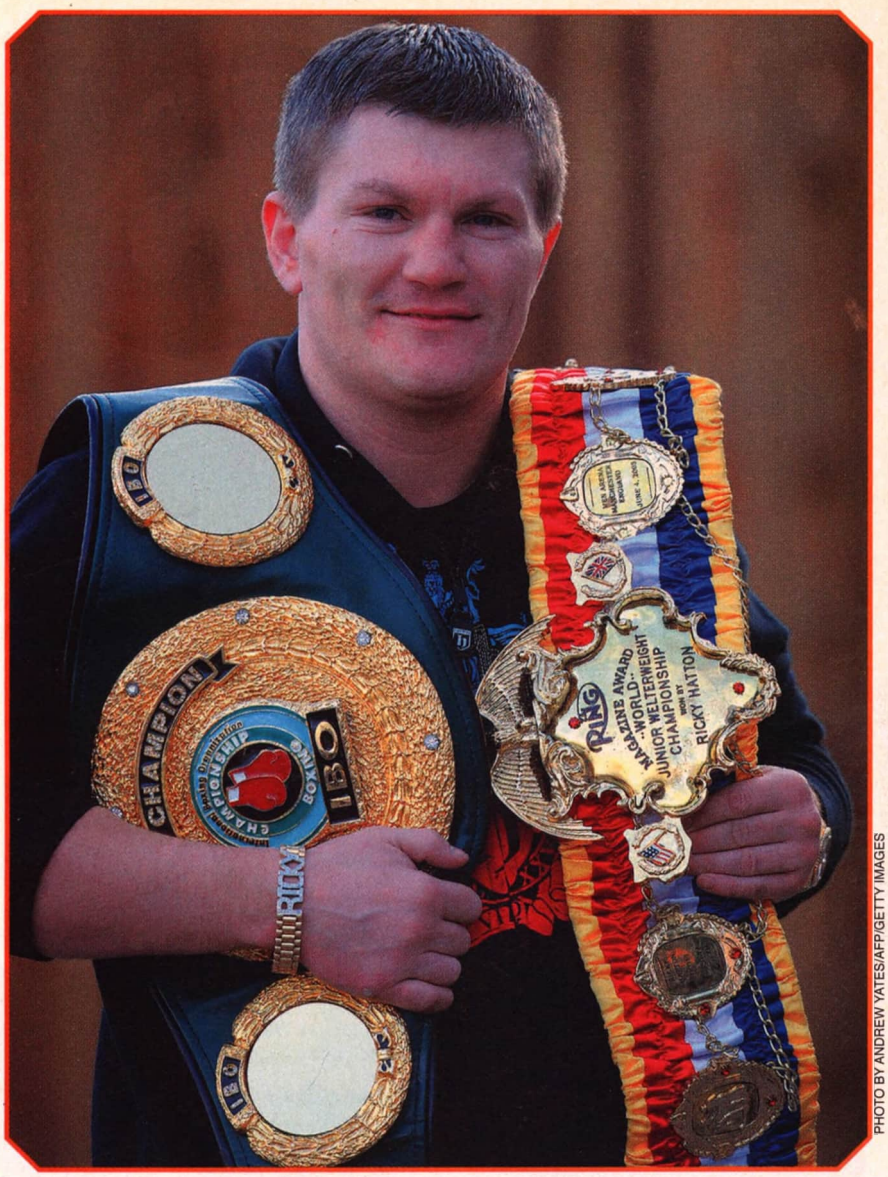

PHOTO BY ANDREW YATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton looked pretty chunky when he posed for this photo on January 29, 2009, the day the Pacquiao fight became official. The champ's weight fluctuation has been a part of his story for years, but so far it does not appear to have hurt him come fight night.

1. Hatton has never lost at junior welterweight.

This isn't really a matter of conventional wisdom; that Hatton is 44-0 when you remove from his record his welterweight loss to Floyd Mayweather and his shaky welterweight win over Luis Collazo is a matter of fact. But whether it's a fact worth leaning on when trying to evaluate this fight is subject to debate.

For starters, there's a first time for everything. Just because Hatton is clearly better at 140 pounds than he is at 147 doesn't mean he can't lose at 140. Additionally, if there's one fighter out there today who renders weight class irrelevant, it's Pacquiao. And, most importantly, of the 45 fighters Hatton has defeated, none bore much resemblance to the reigning pound-for-pound king. If "The Hitman" was 44-0 against guys who fought similarly to Pacquiao, in style and quality, that would mean something. Heck, if he was 23-21 against that crowd we'd be impressed. But all of Hatton's previous success at junior welterweight against fighters not named Pacquiao doesn't mean much when the bell rings at the MGM Grand for this showdown.

2. Pacquiao is too fast for Hatton.

That Pacquiao is the faster of the two men, both with his hands and his feet, is undeniable. So too is the fact that his left hand seems not to travel from Point A to Point B, but rather to

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Mighty Manny weighs in at 142 pounds for the De La Hoya fight, so he should have no problem making the 140-pound limit when he challenges Hatton for the world junior welterweight championship on May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

teleport there. It's a difficult punch to avoid, and even Pac-Man's toughest rival, Juan Manuel Marquez, couldn't do a thing about it in the first round of their first fight.

But over time, Marquez got a handle on it. It takes a fighter with outstanding reflexes, anticipation, and ring smarts to negate Pacquiao's speed, but it can be done. One thing is for sure: When he chooses to use it, Hatton has a world-class jab, and a well-timed jab is always Plan A for offsetting speed.

Also, it must be noted that the Brit is no slouch himself in the speed department. Mayweather remains the only opponent to have completely outclassed Hatton in that regard.

And if the jab doesn't work to disrupt Pacquiao's rhythm and speed advantage, a dose of dirty fighting could well do the trick. It feels like a lifetime ago, but when Pacquiao fought to a technical draw with Agapito Sanchez in 2001, the Dominican's roughhouse tactics gave him all sorts of difficulties. Hatton isn't afraid of getting a little dirty on the inside, and when he has Pacquiao's arms tied up, speed isn't worth a thing.

3. Pacquiao's defense is too good these days.

No doubt about it, the Filipino has made enormous defensive strides under the tutelage of Freddie Roach the past couple of years. But in the two recent fights where Pacquiao looked close to unhittable, against De La Hoya and David Diaz, you can make a strong case that it was the opponent who made him appear that way.

Diaz is just plain slow—game and gutsy, but a lightweight with cruiserweight hand speed. And Roach himself said that De La Hoya couldn't pull the trigger anymore. If that were the case, then wouldn't you figure your guy to look like a defensive whiz?

Hatton is not slow and not shot. He certainly can't expect to have an easy time hitting fleet-footed lefty Pacquiao. But Pacquiao is going to get hit.

4. Hatton should have no fear of the smaller Pacquiao's punch.

This one really *shouldn't* be conventional wisdom, but a lot of people just can't accept that a formerly smaller fighter like Pacquiao can do damage to a career-long junior welterweight like Hatton. Those people are wrong.

Regardless of whether he turned pro at 106 pounds—when he was 16 years old and obviously still growing—Pacquiao has legitimate power. Ask guys like De La Hoya, Diaz, and Erik Morales, all fighters with first-class chins, if he hits hard.

Buddy McGirt, who trained Paulie Malignaggi against Hatton last November, thinks Pacquiao's power will be just as much of an issue for The Hitman as his speed.

"I think Hatton will be able to cope with the speed, but it's the combination of the speed and the power that will be too much for him," McGirt said. "Pacquiao won't get him with one punch, but over the course of the rounds, he'll hurt him. I see him winning by stoppage from an accumulation of shots."

The issue for Hatton isn't only that Pacquiao can punch; equally significant are the question marks surrounding Hatton's chin. Remember, he made Mayweather look like a genuine one-punch kayo artist and he got rocked badly by both Juan Lazcano and Luis Collazo. The 140-pound champ doesn't have a pint-glass chin, by any means, but it isn't a steel keg either.

5. Hatton has more wear and tear on his body.

Because of his habit of putting on the "freshman 15" within days after every fight, then putting on another 30 or so pounds by the time he reports to training camp, the man who has embraced his "Ricky Fatton" nickname is definitely in danger of aging faster

than a fighter should. But he didn't look like he had much wear and tear on him in the Malignaggi fight, did he? If he's past his absolute prime right now, he isn't past it by much.

It might seem odd to suggest Pacquiao could actually be closer to hitting the wall given how extraordinarily he's performed lately, but he's only two months younger than Hatton, turned pro almost three years earlier, and has more fights on his record (53 to 46). Plus, Pacquiao has been playing around with his weight quite a bit lately, going from 130 last March to 135 in June to 147 in December and now back down to 140. When other fighters like Roy Jones and De La Hoya have climbed up and down the scales, they've suffered. Maybe this is the fight where the toll on Pac-Man's body begins to surface.

6. Pacquiao's win over De La Hoya showed that size doesn't matter.

Just as there are some observers who insist size is everything and don't think Pacquiao can hurt Hatton, there will be others who now dismiss size as a complete non-factor based on the events of December 6, 2008. However, those people will have missed two of the key storylines on the Pacquiao-De La Hoya fight: Oscar wasn't the bigger man on fight night, and he made no effort to fight like the bigger man.

De La Hoya came in light, possibly having overtrained, and though he was taller and longer than his opponent, he was pretty much the same size on the scale. And he had too much pride, as the *supposed* bigger man, to tie up, when in fact that's one of the smartest things a larger fighter should do. He never leaned on Pacquiao in clinches, even though all fighters know that it's an effective way to tire out an opponent.

What Pacquiao's win showed was that size doesn't matter if you make no effort to use your size. Hatton, who could conceivably outweigh the Filipino by 10 or 12 pounds in the ring, is not hesitant to tie up and lean on his man.

"I think [trainer Floyd] Mayweather [Sr.] is going to have Hatton impose his size, in some ways that people will expect, and in some ways that they won't," said McGirt. "I think he's going to really have Hatton pressure Pacquiao with that jab. You've got to keep Pacquiao backing up. You can't let him get set; Marquez showed that. If you let him get set, then you've got problems. And I think Mayweather's going to have Hatton muscle Pacquiao around when he gets in close. He's going to have to use his size and strength in the clinches."

7. Hatton has the advantage in a battle of bodypunching.

Throughout his career, Hatton has been one of the sport's premier bodypunchers, particularly with his left hook. He digs in with full torque, and he digs in consistently, round after round, fight after fight. His commitment to working the body doesn't vary based on the opponent like it does for so many other fighters.

But Hatton might just find that Pacquiao is one guy he doesn't want to go bodyshot-for-bodyshot with.

The reason is twofold. First, over the last three years Pacquiao has emerged as an exceptional bodypuncher himself. Particularly in his second fight with Morales, Pac-Man's right hook to the flanks was a vital weapon.

And second, dropping your hands

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Although Hatton has always been known as a fierce bodypuncher, Pacquiao is no slouch when it comes to delivering debilitating shots to the midsection, as is obvious by the look on David Diaz' face as he absorbs a left to the body during his June 2008 loss to Pacquiao.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton shares a laugh with Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer at the Pacquiao-De La Hoya weigh-in. Golden Boy fighters, such as Juan Manuel Marquez in his second bout with Pac-Man, have had problems winning close decisions against Top Rank-promoted fighters in Las Vegas. Could Hatton suffer a similar fate?

to punch to the body often leaves you wide open for counters, and with Pacquiao's hand speed, you never want to leave yourself wide open. Every time Hatton cranks up his left hook to the liver, he risks eating a flush counter. If he keeps his right hand pinned to his chin, that'll help protect him from Pacquiao's searing straight left. But it can't account for every angle.

It's hard to deny that Hatton throws the heavier bodyshots. But don't be shocked to see Pacquiao throw and land more of them.

8. Hatton will be hungrier because Pacquiao is getting more money.

In part, conventional wisdom is incorrect here because what was initially reported was incorrect. Many people still believe that Hatton conceded to Pacquiao's demands and agreed to a 52-48 purse split in the Filipino's favor instead of 50-50. Actually, as was first reported at RingTV.com, Hatton kept his 50 percent, and Pacquiao's take went up a couple of percentage points because his promoter, Bob Arum, sacrificed some of his own pay to sweeten the fighter's deal. So while it's true that Pacquiao will make more money than Hatton, the defending champ shouldn't have any extra pent-up hostility based on having made financial concessions.

In actuality, the negotiating process should leave Pacquiao with a minor mental edge. For starters, whether it's reasonable for him to feel this way or not, the pound-for-pound king still feels disrespected by the 50-50-purse offer, and will potentially have some lingering anger to take out on his opponent. And on top of that, much like a prefight staredown in which one man blinks and the other wins a small battle of gamesmanship, the fact that Pacquiao held out and got some extra money, regardless of whether it came out of Hatton's pocket, lets him come into the ring feeling like he won that first small battle.

9. Pacquiao will have the edge if it goes the distance because Arum holds the power in Las Vegas and Hatton is promoted by rival Golden Boy Promotions.

Let's be clear: Nobody is accusing Arum of wrongdoing. Nobody's accusing him of controlling or bribing judges or anything like that. But even if it's on a subconscious level, judges sometimes favor house fighters and house promoters, and in Vegas, Arum is the house promoter. Call it coincidence, but the last time Pacquiao had a distance fight on The Strip, it was against Golden-Boy-promoted Marquez. It could have gone either way, and it went Pacquiao's way.

But there's one equally viable reason to expect a close decision to go against the house promoter: Hatton's fans. They're the loudest in the fight game, they fly in by the thousands for his major fights, and they can turn a bout 6,000 miles from Manchester into a home game. And if you think a promoter can subconsciously affect a judge's scoring, that's nothing compared to what an *oohing*, *aahing*, word-slurring, song-singing crowd can do.

And for what it's worth, Hatton has never lost a close decision in his career. Granted, he's only had one close fight that went the distance, against Collazo. But that was in the United States, and Hatton did get the benefit of the doubt from the judges.

10. Pacquiao could get caught looking ahead to a fight with Floyd Mayweather.

The truth is, we as fans are more likely to get caught dreaming in advance about a Pacquiao-Mayweather pairing for all of the P-4-P marbles than Pacquiao.

Sure, Manny has undertrained for the occasional opponent in the past (Oscar Larios comes to mind), but never for any of his major fights has he lacked focus, and certainly, the May 2 meeting with Hatton qualifies as a major fight. It's going to be at worst the second-biggest payday of Pacquiao's career. It's for a lineal world championship.

And if Pacquiao is thinking of Mayweather already, then surely he's thinking of the fact that if he loses to Hatton, the appeal of a Mayweather fight shrinks substantially. He has to beat Hatton to make Pacquiao vs. Mayweather lucrative enough to lure "Money" out of his, *ahem*, retirement. So if anything, the looming possibility of a Mayweather fight will provide an extra motivation for Pacquiao to win, not an extra distraction that opens the door wider for Hatton.

***

Conventional wisdom hasn't pronounced a heavy favorite in this fight, but if there's one fighter that the majority of the public is picking, it's Pacquiao. And he's the pick here also.

But the beauty of this "conventional wisdom is worthless" approach to previewing the fight is that we can pick Pacquiao and be right either way. If he wins, then we told you so. And if the exact opposite happens and Hatton bludgeons him from bell to bell, well, we told you so about that too. ■

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THE PROFESSIONAL RECORD OF MANNY PACQUIAO

1995

Jan. 22	Ting Ignacio, Occidental Mindoro, Phil.	W 4
March 18	Pinoy Montejo, Occidental Mindoro	W 4
May 1	Rocky Palma, Cavite, Philippines	W 6
July 1	Dele Decierto, Mandaluyong, Philippines	KO 2
Aug. 3	Flash Simbajon, Mandaluyong	W 6
Sept. 16	Arman Rocil, Mandaluyong	KO 3
Oct. 7	Lolito Laroa, Makati, Philippines	W 8
Oct. 21	Renato Mendones, Palawan, Philippines	KO 2
Nov. 11	Rodulfo Fernandez, Mandaluyong	KO 3
Dec. 9	Rolando Tuyogon, Manila, Philippines	W 10

1996

Jan. 13	Lito Torrejos, Sucat, Philippines	Tech. Win 5
Feb. 9	Rustico Torrecampo, Mandaluyong	KO by 3
April 27	Marlon Carillo, Manila	W 10
May 20	Jun Medina, Manila	KO 4
June 15	Bert Batiller, General Santos, Philippines	KO 4
July 27	Ippo Gala, Mandaluyong	KO 2
Dec. 28	Sungyul Lee, Muntinlupa, Philippines	KO 2

1997

March 8	Mike Luna, Muntinlupa	KO 1
April 24	Wookki Lee, Makati, Philippines	KO 1
May 30	Ariel Austria, Almendras, Philippines	KO 6
June 26	Chokchai Chokwiwat, Manila	KO 5
Sept. 13	Melvin Magramo, Cebu, Philippines	W 10
Dec. 6	Tanompdej Singwangcha, Koronadal, Phil.	KO 1

1998

May 18	Shin Terao, Tokyo, Japan	KO 1
Dec. 4	Chatchai Sasakul, Phuttamonthon, Thailand *(Wins WBC Flyweight Title)*	KO 8

1999

Feb. 20	Todd Makelin, North Cotabato, Philippines	KO 3
April 23	Gabriel Mira, Manila *(Retains WBC Flyweight Title)*	KO 4
Sept. 17	Medgoen Lukchaopormasak, Thammarat, Thailand *(Loses WBC Flyweight Title)*	KO by 3
Dec. 18	Reynante Jamili, Manila	KO 2

2000

March 4	Arnel Barotillo, Manila	KO 4
June 28	Sungkwon Chae, Quezon, Philippines	KO 1
Oct. 14	Nadel Hussein, Manila	KO 10

2001

Feb. 24	Cholho Kang, Antipolo, Philippines	KO 5
April 28	Kumanpetch Kiatvoraphong, Kidapawan	KO 6
June 23	Lehlo Ledwaba, Las Vegas, NV *(Wins IBF Junior Featherweight Title)*	KO 6
Nov. 10	Agapito Sanchez, San Francisco, CA *(Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)*	Tech.Draw 6

2002

June 8	Jorge Eliecer Julio, Memphis, TN *(Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)*	KO 2
Oct. 26	Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym, Davao City, Phil. *(Retains IBF Junior Featherweight Title)*	KO 1

2003

March 15	Serikzhan Yeshmangbetov, Manila	KO 5
July 26	Emmanuel Lucero, Los Angeles, CA *(Retains IBF Super Bantamweight Title)*	KO 3
Nov. 15	Marco Antonio Barrera, San Antonio, TX *(Wins World Featherweight Title)*	KO 11

2004

May 8	Juan Manuel Marquez, Las Vegas *(Retains World Featherweight Title)*	D 12
Dec. 11	Fahsan Por Thawatchai, Taguig, Philippines	KO 4

2005

March 19	Erik Morales, Las Vegas	L 12
May 10	Hector Velazquez, Los Angeles	KO 6

2006

Jan. 21	Erik Morales, Las Vegas	KO 10
July 2	Oscar Larios, Quezon City	W 12
Nov. 18	Erik Morales, Las Vegas	KO 3

2007

April 4	Jorge Solis, San Antonio,TX	KO 8
Oct. 6	Marco Antonio Barrera, Las Vegas	W 12

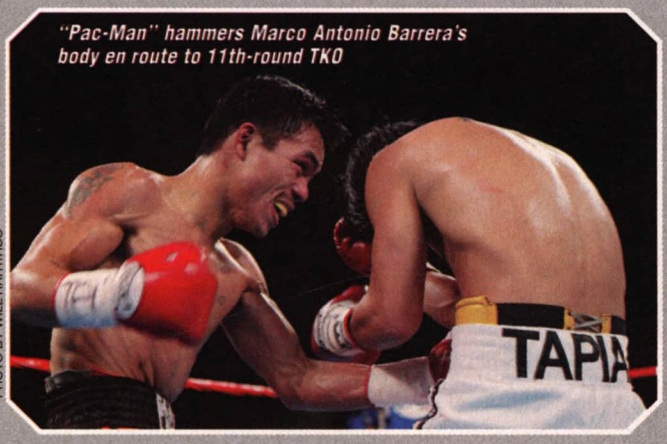
2008

March 15	Juan Manuel Marquez, Las Vegas *(Wins World Junior Lightweight Title)*	W 12
June 28	David Diaz, Las Vegas *(Wins WBC Lightweight Title)*	KO 9
Dec. 6	Oscar De La Hoya, Las Vegas	KO 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KO
53	48	3	2	36

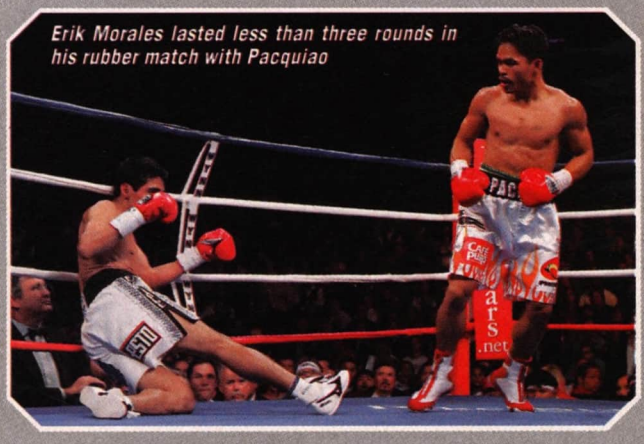
Pacquiao blows away Jorge Elicier Julio in the second round

PHOTO BY JEFF HAYNES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



"Pac-Man" hammers Marco Antonio Barrera's body en route to 11th-round TKO

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO



Erik Morales lasted less than three rounds in his rubber match with Pacquiao

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Oscar De La Hoya absorbs a right along the ropes

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

THE PROFESSIONAL RECORD OF RICKY HATTON

1997

Sept. 11	Kid McAuley, Widnes, England	KO 1
Dec. 19	Robert Alvarez, New York City	W 4

1998

Jan. 17	David Thompson, Bristol, England	KO 1
March 27	Paul Salmon, Telford, England	KO 1
April 18	Karl Taylor, Manchester, England	KO 1
May 30	Mark Ramsey, Bristol	W 6
July 18	Anthony Campbell, Sheffield, England	W 6
Sept. 19	Pascal Montulet, Oberhausen, Germany	KO 2
Oct. 31	Kevin Carter, Atlantic City, NJ	KO 1
Dec. 19	Paul Denton, Liverpool, England	KO 6

1999

Feb. 27	Tommy Peacock, Oldham, England	KO 2
April 3	Brian Coleman, London	KO 2
May 29	Dillon Carew, Halifax, England	KO 5
July 17	Mark Ramsey, Doncaster, England	W 6
Oct. 9	Bernard Paul, Manchester	KO 4
Dec. 11	Mark Winters, Liverpool	KO 4

2000

Jan. 29	Leoncio Garces, Manchester	KO 3
March 25	Pedro Alonso Teran, Liverpool	KO 4
May 16	Ambioris Figuero, Warrington, England	KO 4
June 10	Gilbert Quiros, Detroit, MI	KO 2
Sept. 23	Giuseppe Lauri, London	KO 5
Oct. 21	Jonathan Thaxton, London	W 12

2001

March 26	Tony Pep, London	KO 4
July 7	Jason Rowland, Manchester	KO 4
Sept. 15	John Bailey, Manchester	KO 5
Oct. 27	Freddie Pendleton, Manchester	KO 2
Dec. 15	Justin Rowsell, London	KO 2

2002

Feb. 9	Mikhail Krivolapov, Manchester	KO 9
June 1	Eamonn Magee, Manchester	W 12
Sept. 28	Stephen Smith, Manchester	W Disq. 2
Dec. 14	Joe Hutchinson, Newcastle, England	KO 4

2003

April 5	Vince Phillips, Manchester	W 12
Sept. 27	Aldo Rios, Manchester	KO 9
Dec. 13	Ben Tackie, Manchester	W 12

2004

April 3	Dennis Holbaek Pedersen, Manchester	KO 6
June 12	Carlos Vilches, Manchester	W 12
Oct. 1	Michael Stewart, Manchester	KO 5
Dec. 11	Ray Oliveira, London	KO 10

2005

June 4	Kostya Tszyu, Manchester *(Wins World Junior Welterweight Title)*	KO 11
Nov. 26	Carlos Maussa, Sheffield *(Retains World Junior Welterweight Title; Wins WBA Junior Welterweight Title)*	KO 9

2006

May 13	Luis Collazo, Boston, MA *(Wins WBA Welterweight Title)*	W 12

2007

Jan. 20	Juan Urango, Las Vegas, NV *(Retains World Junior Welterweight Title)*	W 12
June 23	Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas *(Retains World Junior Welterweight Title)*	KO 4
Dec. 8	Floyd Mayweather, Las Vegas *(For World Welterweight Title)*	KO by 10

2008

May 24	Juan Lazcano, Manchester *(Retains World Junior Welterweight Title)*	W 12
Nov. 12	Paul Malignaggi, Las Vegas *(Retains World Junior Welterweight Title)*	KO 11

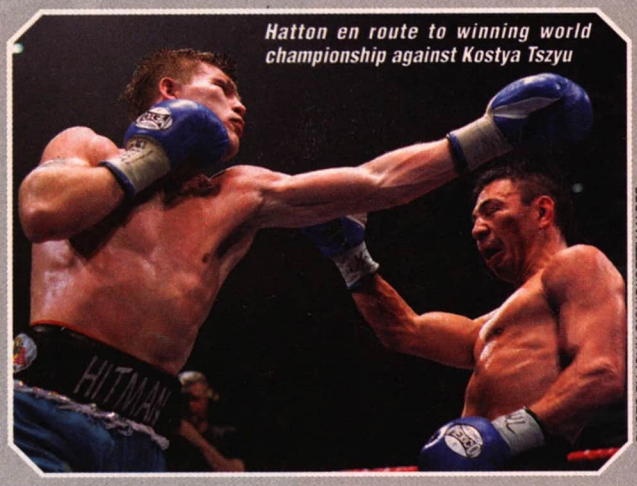
FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KO
46	45	1	0	32

Hatton rediscovered his left jab against Malignaggi

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Hatton digs a left hook deep into Ray Oliveira's midsection

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY MAGES



Hatton en route to winning world championship against Kostya Tszyu

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY MAGES

Luis Collazo gets hooked by Hatton

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

PACQUIAO VS. HATTON

20 Experts Pick The Winner

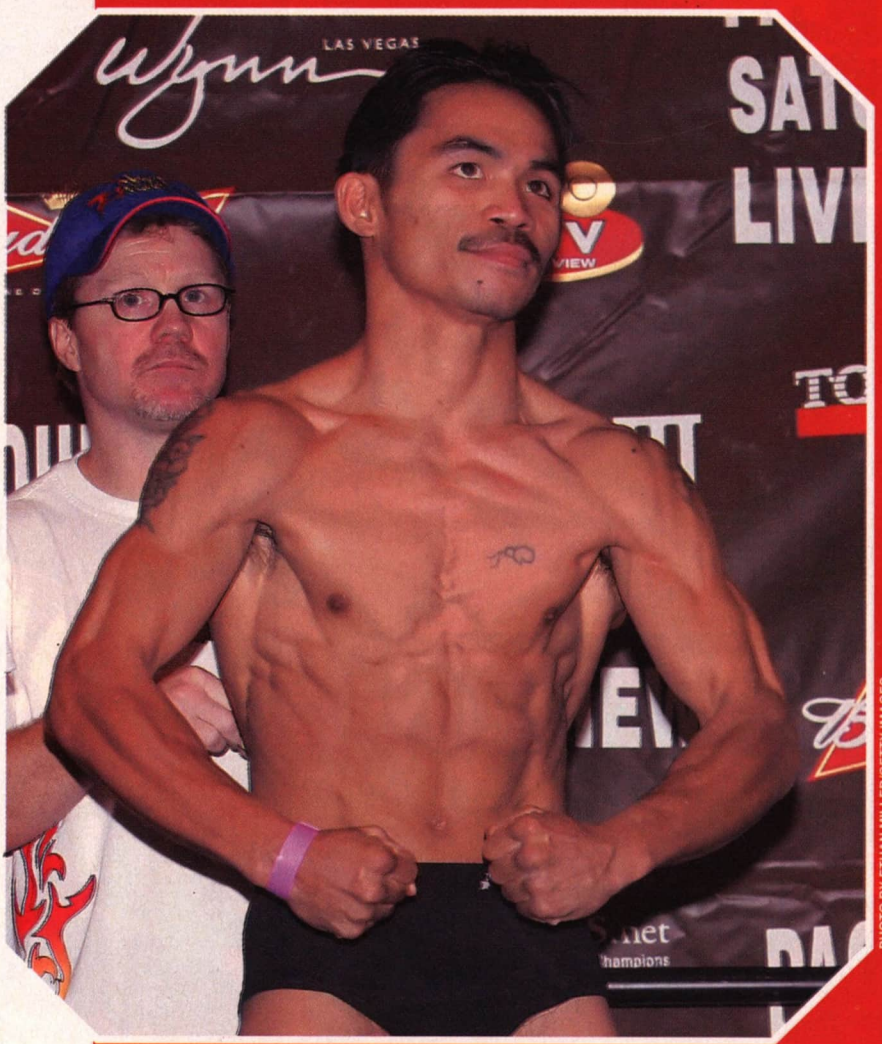


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Compiled by Joseph Santoliquito

The last time Manny Pacquiao was about to step through the ropes, many doubted he would be able to overcome the size difference to beat Oscar De La Hoya. Pacquiao shut the mouths of his detractors and shut out De La Hoya before the fight was stopped after the eighth round. He proved to be so successful in climbing weight classes, he had experts calling him the modern-day Henry Armstrong.

Sitting ringside for the Pacquiao-De La Hoya was THE RING *junior welterweight world champion Ricky Hatton. He had such a huge stake in the outcome, he would not even allow himself to be pinned down to making a concrete prediction ("Oscar by knockout or Manny by points"). He may have made more money had "The Dream Match" ended in De La Hoya's favor, but he will do just fine, financially at least, when he meets Pacquiao on May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.*

Hatton vs. Pacquiao presents an intriguing contrast of styles. Hatton, 45-1 (32), likes to come forward and brawl. Under new trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr., Hatton showed some new and clever footwork in stopping Paul Malignaggi in November 2008. Pacquiao, 48-3-2 (36), was masterful against De La Hoya, using distance, hand speed, and footwork to lump up The Golden Boy and force him to quit on his stool. The Hatton fight will mark the fourth different weight class in which Pacquiao has fought in his last four fights.

He beat Juan Manual Marquez for the junior lightweight world championship in March last year, following that up by demolishing the game David Diaz to take the WBC lightweight title. Then he stepped up two weight classes to face De La Hoya in a non-title welterweight bout.

Hatton has one glaring blemish on his record—and it happened to come at the MGM Grand, when Floyd Mayweather Jr., then THE RING *welterweight world champion, stopped him in 10 rounds in December 2007. But the "Hitman" is undefeated as a junior welterweight.*

For a change, Pacquiao will be picking on someone close to his own size. Hatton is listed as 5'7½", with a 65-inch reach. Pacquiao is 5'6½", with a 63-inch reach.

There are plenty of unanswered questions going in: Can Hatton withstand Pacquiao's hand speed and movement? Can Hatton adjust to Pacquiao's southpaw style after struggling against southpaw Luis Collazo in May 2006? Can Pacquiao deal with Hatton's pressure and roughhouse tactics?

THE RING polled 20 experts from North America, Europe, and Asia for their opinions and predictions as to what they think will happen when Pac-Man meets the Hitman. Here is what they had to say:

Steve Farhood (Showtime boxing analyst): "What's become apparent is that it's going to take a puncher, and not a speed-boxer, to defeat Hatton. Pacquiao has both speed *and* power, so I look for him to use the former to get in position, and the latter to punish Hatton for his aggressiveness. Pacquiao has improved so much since his days at 122 and 126 pounds, and Freddie Roach deserves most of the credit. Pacquiao is too balanced a fighter to lose to Hatton at this point. Regardless, this will be an action fight all the way. Pacquiao by stoppage in nine."

Naazim Richardson (trainer of Shane Mosley and Bernard Hopkins): "Ricky Hatton is a tough son of a gun, but Pacquiao has decent size and a good punch. That fight is definitely a barnburner. Pacquiao will have to box Hatton; he can't sit there and brawl with him. If Pacquiao stays within his style, he has the edge, but Ricky Hatton is a problem. He'd give Lennox Lewis problems. He's one of those guys who follows you outside the bar into the parking lot talking stuff, running his mouth. But I see Pacquiao winning by decision."

Kevin Mitchell (*The Observer* sportswriter): "On paper—where no fight has ever been fought—this is a fairly even fight. Hatton has not lost at 140; Pacquiao has not fought there. But Pac-Man has fought and won nearly everywhere else around his weight (whatever that is). He is a phenomenon. I'm not sure how much Hatton has left. Great fight until the later stages, with Hatton giving his all—which won't be quite good enough. Manny on points or late stoppage."

Stuart Brennan (*Manchester Evening News* boxing writer): "I may be swimming against the stream here, but I take Hatton to win, possibly by a late stoppage. Ricky learned an awful lot from the Mayweather defeat, and his link with Floyd Sr. has given him fresh purpose and a few new ideas without taking away from his strengths. Hatton will use his superior strength to wear the smaller man down. For all his brilliance, I don't see Pac-Man being able to hold off a swarming Hatton for 12 rounds."

Per-Ake Persson (*Boxing News* and boxingscene.com writer): "Ricky Hatton has strength, stamina, and power on his side and could also be the fresher of the two. Manny Pacquiao has a long career and big steps up in weight behind him. He has also fought the tougher opponents and proved himself time after time at the highest level. Manny will win on a late-round stoppage—but it's an excellent matchup between two great warriors."

Juan Lazcano (junior welterweight contender, who lost to Hatton): "Hatton has Floyd Mayweather Sr. in his corner, and that might make some difference, but I don't think it will make that big of a difference. Hatton has to swarm and be aggressive and make the fight, or else Pacquiao will pick him apart. Hatton will bring it to Pacquiao, and Pacquiao is too swift, even for Hatton. Manny will stop him late or win a convincing decision."

Mark Collings (*Esquire U.K.* boxing writer): "Tough one to call, but I think Hatton will be too big and strong for Pacquiao. Hatton has found a little extra bounce and desire with Mayweather Sr. I think Ricky's rekindled boxing skills and extra zip will be enough for a mid- to late-round stoppage."

Paul Malignaggi (junior welterweight contender, who lost to Hatton): "I have a lot of respect for Ricky Hatton and his family and friends, but what it boils down to is Pacquiao's speed. It's phenomenal. He has an ability to move in and out and force Hatton to hold, just to slow down the guy and have him stop punching and moving. I don't know if Hatton can slow down Pacquiao. Pacquiao is Bruce Lee, changing the punching distance so fast. I'll be pulling for Ricky, but if I had to pick, it's Manny Pacquiao winning."

Ronnie Nathanielsz (*Manila Standard* boxing writer): "Manny Pacquiao's fight against Ricky Hatton will be far more competitive and interesting than with a drained and listless Oscar De La Hoya. Hatton is likely to hold to try to prevent Manny from punching back. But Manny will simply have too much for Hatton—speed, power, movement, and a relentless training grind that ensures he is at his best, physically. Pacquiao wins by stoppage within 10 rounds at the most."

Luis Collazo (former WBA welterweight titleholder, who lost the belt to Hatton): "I'm going with Pac-Man. He's a smaller fighter and brings everything else to the table. He throws punches in bunches and he's a smart fighter. I think he can dominate Hatton because Hatton doesn't deal with boxers very well. I don't think Ricky has been the same since he fought me. Juan Lazcano hurt him, and I think Manny can definitely hurt him. I see a late stoppage for Pacquiao."

David Diaz (former WBC lightweight titleholder, who lost the belt to Pacquiao): "I'm going with Pac-Man. He showed great boxing ability against Oscar. I'm usually wrong, but I feel pretty good about this one. Hatton won't be able to outbox Pacquiao. Pacquiao can definitely hurt you, and that's the other thing where I give Pac-Man the nod, because Hatton comes rushing right in and Manny can catch him. I see a stoppage for Pac-Man."

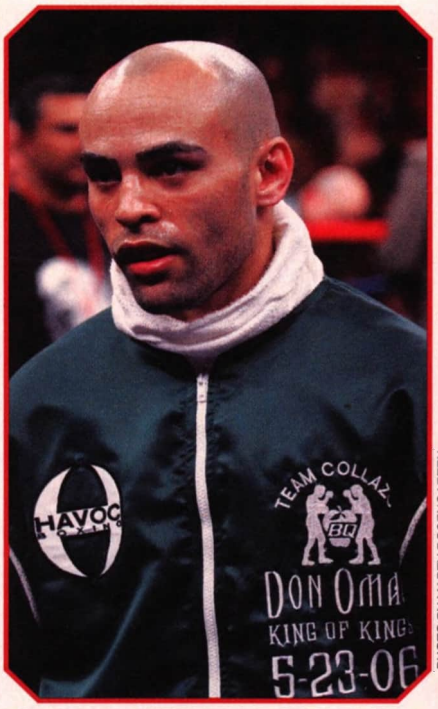


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Former WBA welterweight titlist Luis Collazo sees Pacquiao beating the "Hitman" handily, "Juan Lazcano hurt him, and I think Manny can definitely hurt him. I see a late stoppage for Pacquiao."

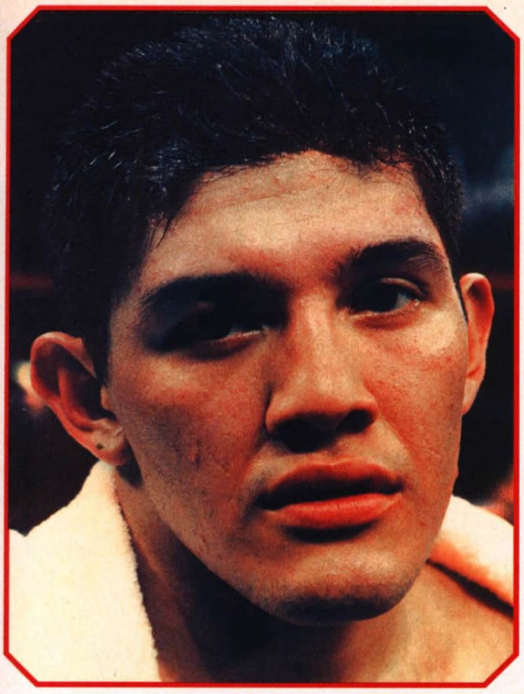


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Former WBC lightweight titlist David Diaz admits he's usually wrong when it comes to predictions, but he feels pretty certain about this one, saying "Pacquiao can definitely hurt you, and that's the other thing where I give Pac-Man the nod, because Hatton comes rushing right in and Pac-Man can catch him."

Scott Mallon (THE RING's Thailand correspondent): "As demonstrated by Mosley-Margarito fights, the unexpected can and does happen in boxing. Thus, it won't surprise me if Ricky Hatton knocks out Manny Pacquiao. Speed kills though, and if Pacquiao has an edge, it's in the speed department. The fight will be close for the first six rounds, but the Pac-Man will come on strong in the second half of the battle to score a hard-fought points decision."

Dennis Principe (SportsNews.ph editor): "Manny Pacquiao has evolved into one excellent ring tactician over the years, as shown by his scintillating wins over David Diaz and Oscar De La Hoya. Ricky Hatton seems to have huge trouble fighting crafty boxers, like he did against Floyd Mayweather. Add to that Manny's punches pack more wallop than Mayeather's. I see the Pac-Man winning by knockout in the middle rounds."

J. Michael Falgoust (*USA Today* boxing writer): "The more exciting the fight, the more Ricky Hatton's chances diminish. His style is tailor-made for Pac-Man, whose toughest fights have been against opponents who used their jabs and dictated the terms of their exchanges. Hatton lacks that discretion and ability. I expect him to maul Pacquiao much in the way Agapito Sanchez did to disrupt the Filipino, and even stretch the rules akin to the flagrant low blow he used to cripple Kostya Tszyu. But it won't matter. For every punch Hatton lands, Pacquiao will land two or three. And they'll do more damage. Pacquiao by seventh-round stoppage."

Joe Koizumi (THE RING's Asian correspondent): "We shouldn't underestimate Hatton, since he's moved to this busy move-in-and-out style he shown against Malignaggi. Hatton may cope with Pacquiao's hand speed, only if he effectively keeps boring in and working the body. The problem is Hatton's experience against southpaws. As shown against Luis Collazo, especially in the last round, Hatton is not so good at fighting lefties. Pacquiao, at his prime, will have to outbox and outpunch the physically stronger 'Fatton,' who will actually weigh more than 150 pounds at fight time. But Pacquiao will eventually outspeed Hatton."

Al Bernstein (Showtime *Championship Boxing* ringside analyst): "I think it's a real interesting fight, and it's interesting because Ricky Hatton is a true 140-pound fighter. He has strength and some quickness at that weight. Manny Pacquiao, while proven he can fight at higher weights, still hasn't fought a lot there. Stylistically, it should be excellent. Hatton facing the old Pacquiao, I'd pick Hatton to win. The old Pacquiao was a little more one-dimensional, taking unnecessary risks. Now that he's moved up in weight, he's completely reinvented himself. This Pacquiao is a more difficult opponent. I think Pacquiao wins in a close decision."

Bernard Fernandez (*Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer): "Now that he's acclaimed as boxing's pound-for-pound best, maybe there is reason for Manny Pacquiao to be afraid, very afraid. The recent rash of upsets in boxing suggests that being number one means you have nowhere to go but down. But I see Pac-Man strengthening his claim to the top spot against Ricky Hatton. Besides the fact that Pacquiao is quicker and a southpaw (remember how Luis Collazo bedeviled Hatton?), so I see Pacquiao by late-round stoppage."

Steve Bunce (*Buncey's Boxing Hour* host, Setanta Sports commentator): "Speed wins this fight. How does Ricky get away from Pac-Man's speed? Floyd Mayweather Sr. wants Ricky for eight weeks to go over the plan. Perhaps they need to chase chickens, Rocky style! Ricky has to put in the performance of his life just to be competitive in this fight. Ricky can beat Pac-Man with fast movement—he needs to kibosh left hooks from eight feet away. Ricky has the speed. I see Hatton winning on points."

Claude Abrams (British *Boxing News* editor): "I go for Pacquiao to win by decision, though 12 months ago I'd have sided with Hatton. After all, 140 is his optimum weight. What's Pacquiao's—147? 135? Manny, though, is quicker than Hatton and much smarter than he used to be. He can box cleverly as well as fight ferociously. So too can Hatton, mind you. Manny's got excellent footwork and, of course, the type of accuracy and power that can stop Hatton in his tracks and make him think twice."

Ted Lerner (THE RING's Philippines correspondent): "If Ricky Hatton were fighting the old, one dimensional Manny Pacquiao, he would have a real good chance. But the new Pacquiao is too multi-pronged, too fast and strong, and too much on his game to let this one get away. No doubt Hatton will try to impose his will on the Pac-Man. This is just what Pacquiao wants, and he's sure to find plenty of openings. The Hitman will get his licks, but I like Pacquiao by late stoppage."

Final Tally: Pacquiao 17, Hatton 3. ■

MAYWEATHER VS. ROACH

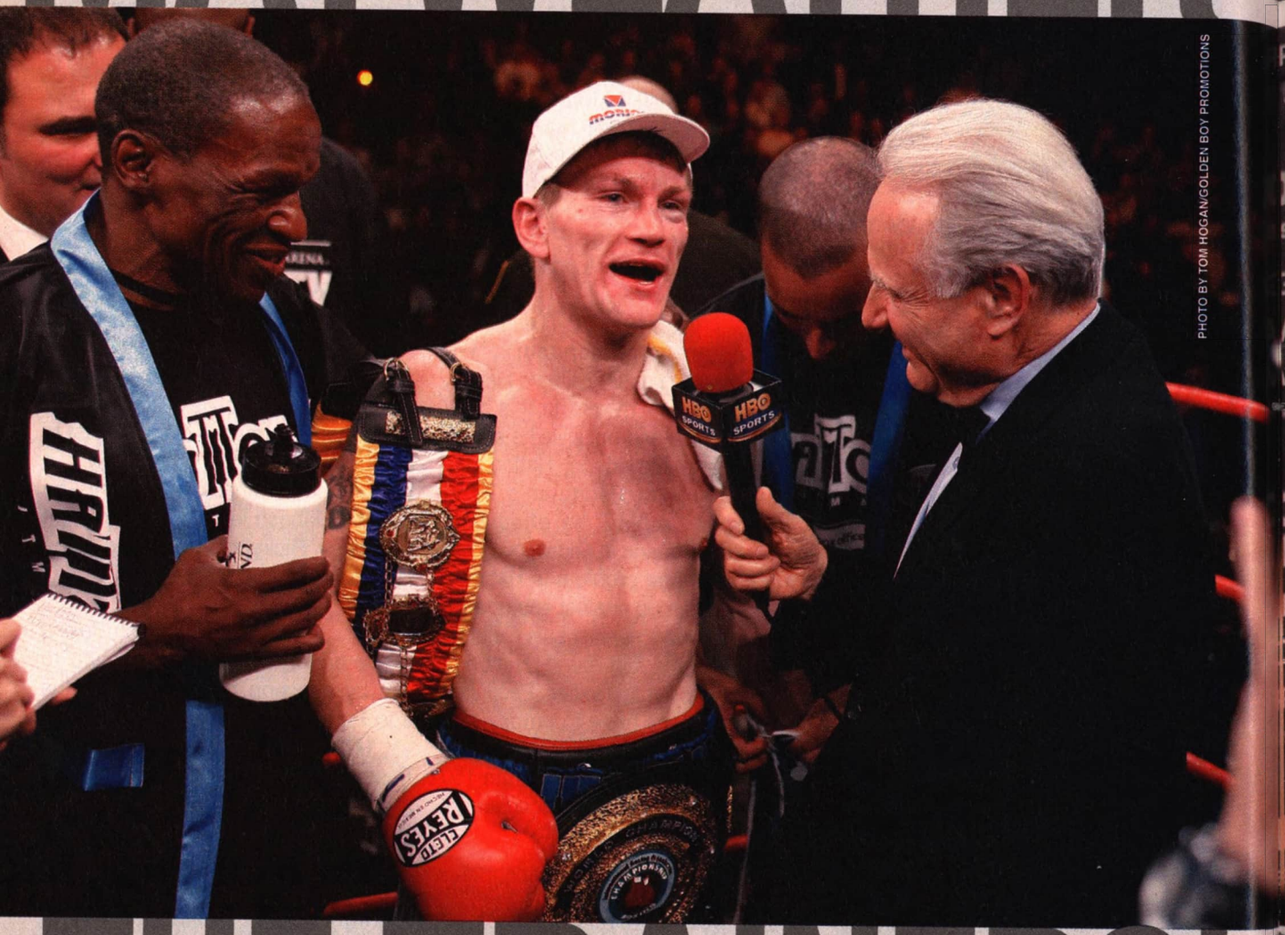


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PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

THE TRAINERS' MINI-WAR

Roach and the magnificently conditioned Pacquiao at the weigh-in for "Pac-Man's" December 2008 bout with De La Hoya (right), and a Mayweather with Hatton and HBO's Larry Merchant following the junior welterweight champion's November victory over Malignaggi (above).

By David Mayo

The arch-rivals in the Ricky Hatton-Manny Pacquiao blockbuster sometimes run into each other at fights, where one feels compelled to say hello, then asks himself why. The other spews vitriol that the Filipino media consumes like plates of longanisa, the sausage staple popular on Pacquiao's native island. Both are agreeable without shying from disagreement. It's exactly why the world clamored for the promising junior welterweight showdown in the first place.

That the arch-rivals are the trainers, and not Hatton and Pacquiao themselves, only adds another layer of intrigue to the 140-pound showdown.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Mayweather regales the media during a prefight press conference for Hatton-Malignaggi. The verbose trainer often insults his fighters' foes and their trainers by spouting doggerel.

Floyd Mayweather Sr. and Freddie Roach have known each other some 25 years. They fought on the same show one night in 1984 (Roach remembered; Mayweather didn't), though they grew to know each other that year when Roach was working out in Las Vegas while Mayweather briefly trained his brother Roger for a fight against Tony Baltazar. No surprise, the brothers nearly came to blows one day and the partnership broke up before the fight.

In the years since, Mayweather and Roach ascended to positions as two of boxing's leading trainers, working with some of the highest-earning fighters in history. Yet they never have worked in opposite corners.

Verbally, they engaged their first meeting months before the May 2 Hatton-Pacquiao clash becomes reality.

Professionally, they differ as to what extent they can affect the nature of the fight, as they do on so many points. Roach stresses that fighters are born, not made, which explains why Mayweather's namesake son ascended to the top of the sport. Mayweather says that kind of reasoning is exactly why his son walked through Oscar De La Hoya in the second half of their 2007 fight, after he priced himself out of a potential intra-family battle and was replaced by Roach as De La Hoya's trainer.

Regardless, the two are prepared to engage the fight, and not just in the ring.

"I've got a tendency to get mad sometimes," Roach said. "Sometimes, I realize who it's coming from and I'll be calm. But there'll be a point where I'll snap back. That's my nature. I know I'll say something to fire back. I'm trying to control it because I like Ricky Hatton, I think he's a good guy, I respect him as a fighter, I don't have anything bad to say about the fighter. But I'm sure once Floyd starts his second-grade poems, I'm going to get mad sometimes."

This is what Roach means: "Freddie the Joke Coach Roach wouldn't dare to approach because the Roach is blowing smoke with no hope. And that's what's going on in this fight," Mayweather said.

What's really going on is a fight with tremendous international flavor that matches preeminent fighters, preeminent trainers, and polar-opposite philosophies about the impact the latter can have on the former.

If conflict is the defining characteristic of a good fight, the training matchup qualifies on a number of levels. The 49-year-old Roach said he finds Mayweather "harmless" and thinks his rival overstates his impact in the sport. Mayweather, 56, said Roach isn't the sound tactician he is credited with being.

They also have some soft spots. Roach said Mayweather is "not as abrasive" as brother Roger Mayweather, whom Roach said he "hates." Mayweather, who has suffered for years with sarcoidosis, the lung disease that claimed the life of entertainer Bernie Mac, said he feels compassion for Roach's battles with Parkinson's syndrome.

"I'll see him at fights once in a while and we'll say hi to each other," Roach said. "Sometimes I get mad at myself for saying hi to him, but it's just my instinct. I don't really have anything against him."

"I don't dispute Pacquiao's work with Freddie Roach," Mayweather said, "and I won't speak against Freddie Roach because of his illness. But will I speak against him personally? Hell, yes. I'm just a much better trainer, all the way around."

It all harkens a series of debates that may be resolved—to some degree, at least—in the most-anticipated fight of the year to date:

What impact can a trainer really have?

Of all their philosophical disagreements, this might be the most contentious. Roach said De La Hoya never fully adapted to Mayweather's teachings and always reverted to his core style. Other than Mayweather's son, he questions the rival trainer's body of work.

"He took Oscar over after Oscar was a multiple world champion. And his son, well, I believe fighters are born and not made," Roach said. "I think all of us trainers are overrated because, if we didn't have talented fighters, we wouldn't be much. It's the fighter. Once the bell rings, I sit down and he fights. If you have a good rapport with each other and you trust each other, you can get your points across. Outside of that, you can help guide them along the way, but like Manny always says, 'You got me ready to fight, but it's up to me to win the fight.' And that's very true."

Mayweather said that perspective is skewed because Roach's prized pupil, Pacquiao, already had his core principles instilled when they got together—just as De La Hoya did with him—and Roach never has taken a fighter from seed to sickle, as he did with his son.

"It ain't going to be no technical fight for Pac-Man because he ain't no technical fighter and Freddie Roach ain't technical himself," Mayweather said. "I'm not worried about that. You won't believe how much Hatton has learned in a short period. And what really surprised me about him, with the kind of fighter he is, is that he learns really fast. Most guys who just want to hit you upside the head, you figure they can't learn, they just want to keep pressure on the guy. But that isn't the case with him. He wants to win and he wants to learn."

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Roach gives De La Hoya a bit of last-minute advice between rounds of "The Golden Boy's" 2007 fight with "Pretty Boy Floyd." Big Floyd makes light of the Roach's claim that he saw flaws in De La Hoya, which he knew Pacquiao could exploit.

Assuming a trainer can have a significant impact, can it happen quickly enough to benefit Hatton?

By fight night, Roach will have trained Pacquiao for 20 fights over nearly eight years. Mayweather will have trained Hatton for two fights and about eight months. It has to make a difference, although Mayweather draws upon the old football parallel that the most improvement comes between the first and second games. As solid as Hatton's performance against Paulie Malignaggi was in their only fight together, Mayweather said his man will be much better against Pacquiao.

"When I started working with Hatton, to show you how bad it was, he hit me in the face a couple of times while I was holding the pads," Mayweather said. "How could you hit me in the face when I'm holding up the pads in your face? He was that non-focused on how you were supposed to throw punches. He was scaring the crap out of me every time. I had to look out for my face or the man was going to hit me in the mouth."

Even that is a source of contention, because Roach said the athletic, high-activity hand-pad technique Mayweather employs might be impressive to watch

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather and Hatton during a workout in preparation for Malignaggi. The trainer claims that the Englishman was so wild with his punches, he clipped Big Floyd in the face a couple of times during their mitt drills.

but has little to do with reality. He suggested that it is part of a broader difference between them, that he is more a fight-specific tactician, while Mayweather is a style-specific trainer.

"When I work the mitts with my fighters, I only do things that will happen in the ring," Roach said. "What he does doesn't happen in the ring. It's more of a game to me. I think the way he works the mitts is a good conditioning tool, but that's as far as I would go. I take each fight separately and I take each fighter separately. I think Floyd Sr. trains every fighter pretty much the same.

"He can try to make Hatton a better boxer, I think, but I certainly believe Hatton is a bit stuck in his ways. When he gets hit, he's going to revert back to what he does naturally. Maybe he'll improve his boxing ability a little bit, or try to, but I just don't think it's possible to change somebody this late in his career, in such a short time."

Roach did agree Hatton should have a better grasp in his second fight with Mayweather.

"Your first fight together, it probably wouldn't be there," he said. "But your second fight, you start to learn each other's style a little bit more and you get comfortable with each other. The more time you spend with somebody, the more trust level you have with each other and they're willing to try what you're teaching them a little bit more."

Could Mayweather's defense-first style diminish the anticipated brawl?

If the two trainers agree on anything, this is it.

"Since Manny is going to attack him right away, because that's his nature, I don't think it will have a bearing on the fight," Roach said. "If Hatton was fighting a boxer, it might have an impact. But with Manny's style, he's going to force Hatton to fight him every round. I don't think the chin tucks and shoulder rolls will come out very much in this one because if he lays on the ropes with Manny Pacquiao, it's a death sentence."

Mayweather said styles mandate

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pacquiao seems fully focused on what Roach is telling him during a gym session prior to the De La Hoya fight. One of the few things Roach and Mayweather agree on is that the May 2 match between their respective pupils is going to be a fan-friendly punchout.

a brawl and his job is plotting how to control it.

"Pacquiao cannot out-fight Ricky Hatton, because Hatton is too strong, too physical," Mayweather said. "If Freddie Roach is looking for shoulder rolls and chin tucks, that's a Little Floyd thing. That's what I taught him to do. I'm a teacher, not a trainer. I give you what you need. I don't just give you what you have, I give you what you need. I'm not going to teach you to tuck your chin when you've never tucked your chin. Forget that."

Regardless their differences, Mayweather and Roach agree Hatton-Pacquiao is a fight in which the natural styles complement each other and the trainers should be tactical without being meddlesome.

"I just want to take what Hatton already has and build on it," Mayweather said. "I want him to start doubling his jab up, tripling his jab up. Jab to the body, jab to the head. Feint to the body, jab to the head. Feint to the head, jab to the body. Feint, walk, touch. Give a lot of angles, show a lot of different things, make him think something's coming that's not coming, then shoot it off and let it go. Those are the things I'll be focusing on."

Roach said his focus will be to avoid some of the roughhousing Hatton prefers.

"Pacquiao likes to fight, that's for sure. And Hatton does too. That's why the matchup is really good," Roach said. "But there are certain adjustments we have to make because, one thing about Hatton, he'll throw two or three punches and then he mugs you and holds you, ties you up, and kind of smothers you. He tries to nullify your offense. So that's something we have to make adjustments for, to make sure that doesn't happen. You can't stand right in front of Ricky Hatton, that's for sure.

"It's a very tough fight because Hatton's got a lot of balls. He truly thinks he was in the Mayweather fight until he got knocked out—and maybe he was. It was a competitive fight and he fought well. And I thought he brought the best out in Mayweather because he forced Mayweather to fight. So I think he's going to force us to fight and that's why we can't take him lightly. He's younger, more vibrant than Oscar was."

Mayweather is dismissive of that stunningly easy win because "Pacquiao didn't beat Oscar De La Hoya, he beat a dehydrated man who looked like Oscar." As for Roach's insistence that he pursued that fight because he worked with De La Hoya and realized there were tactical aspects Pacquiao could exploit, Mayweather said that won't be the case with Hatton.

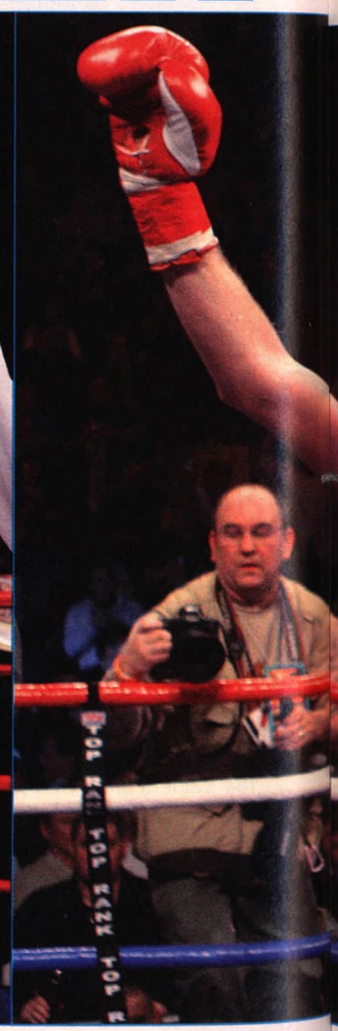
"Freddie Roach was talking that stuff about, 'Oh, we beat Oscar, and I knew we were going to beat Oscar, because I saw something,'" Mayweather said. "Well, he's walking around blind if he thinks he sees something this time." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

HOW TO FIX A BROKEN FIGHTER

Cotto & Pavlik Follow The Age-Old Formula

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK



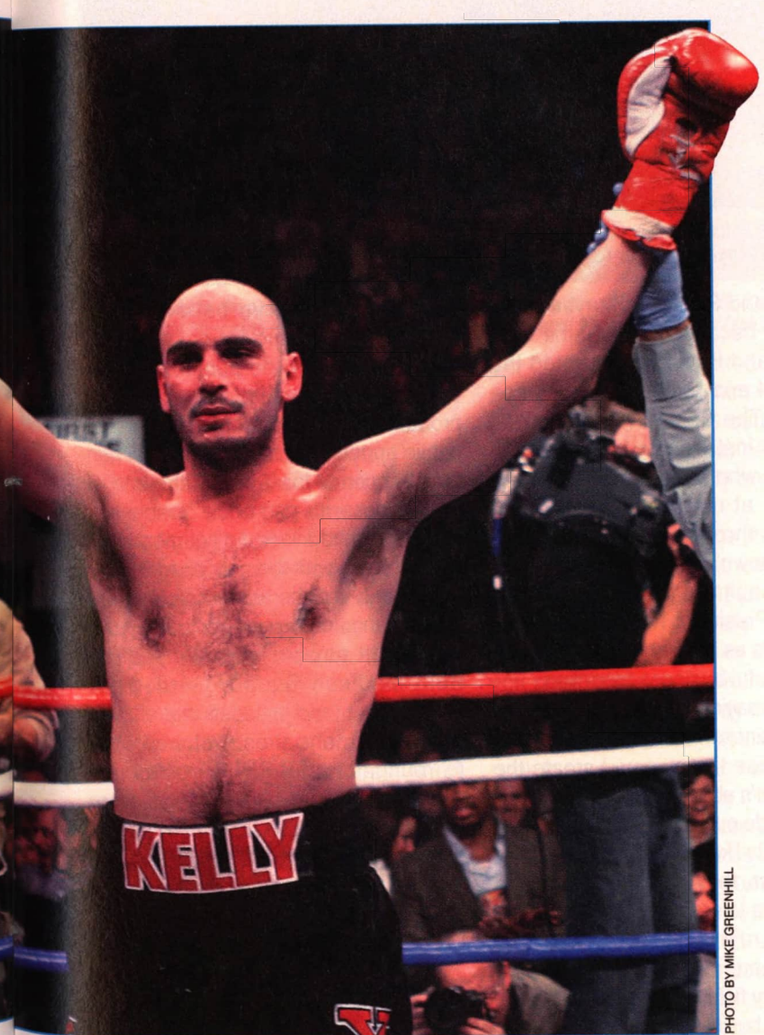


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Just what the matchmaker ordered: On the same night in different cities, Cotto (opposite page) and Pavlik (left) washed the bad taste of their first pro defeats out of their mouths with relatively easy wins.

By William Dettloff

Today's fight business may be the only game in all of professional sports that requires of its stars the painful but necessary undertaking of a kind of rehab that has nothing to do with injury, substance addiction, or an overly earnest temper or libido.

No one cares when a ballclub loses a game or seven, or, when all has been said and written at the end of a long season, even 20 or 30 games. Even in American football, where the regular season consists of a mere 16 contests, a single loss doesn't result in the call for a revamped ad campaign and the dramatic pronouncement of a return to the proverbial drawing board, which remains the mating call for every pug who sooner or later watches his opponent's hand raised instead of his own.

When an undefeated, championship-level fighter finally loses,

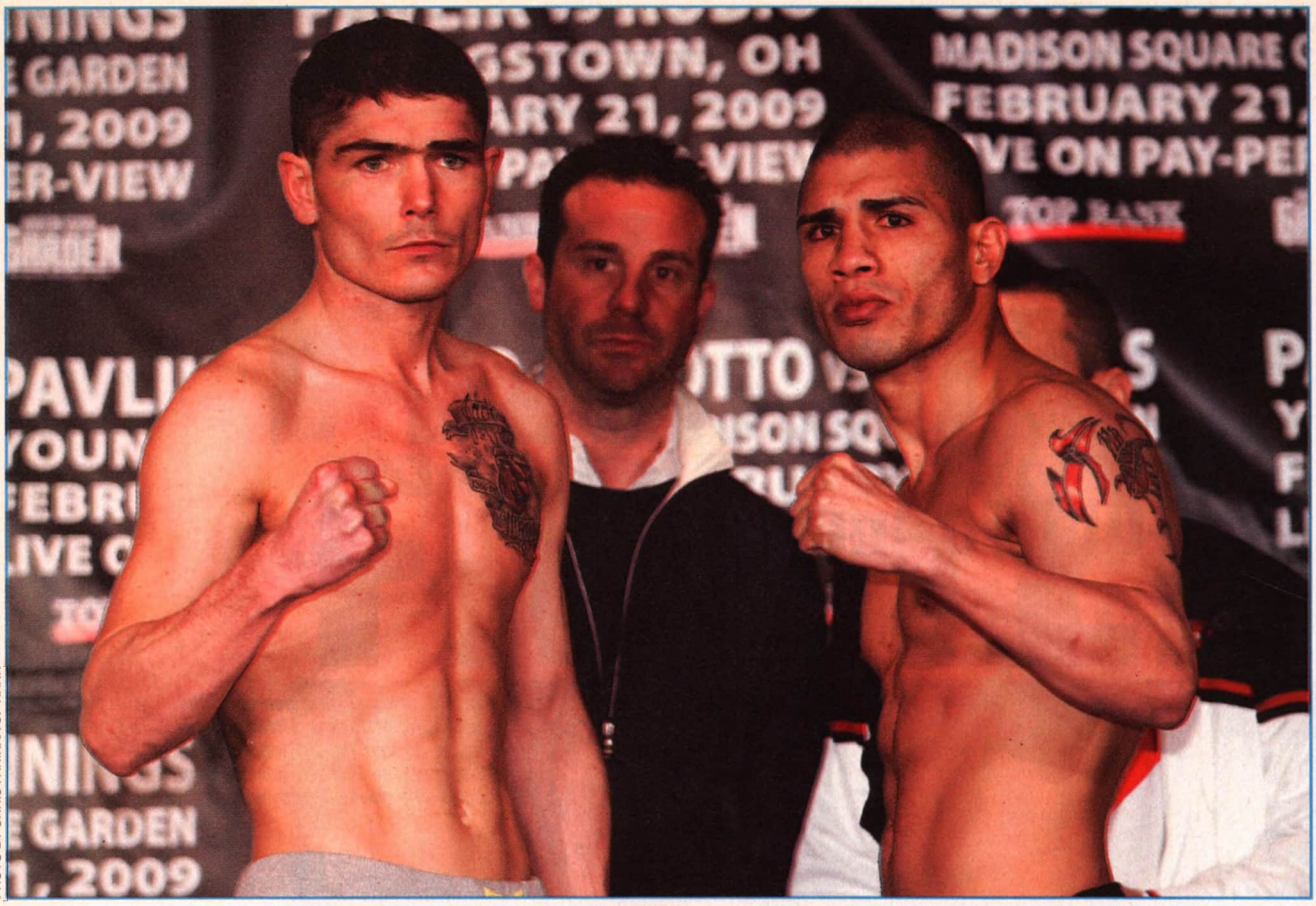


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Top Rank President Todd duBoef, pictured between Jennings and Cotto, believes that rebuilding fighters after a loss is just part of his job. The trick is to find a reasonably good comeback opponent, but not one who will hand the house fighter another loss.

as virtually all of them do eventually, an entire sub-industry kicks into gear toward, firstly and most importantly, creating an alibi for the loss where possible, and then, restoring the fighter's credibility among the masses. If the job is done well and professionally, everyone gets to move on again toward economic sustainability until the next loss, when the process is repeated—as it always is, eventually.

In February, the careers of Miguel Cotto and Kelly Pavlik entered that second phase and the two fighters went a reasonable way toward redeeming themselves to the degree that any fighter can after losing professionally for the first time. Cotto deadpanned his way through a typically methodical knockout of Michael Jennings in New York, and Pavlik drained the fight out of Marco Antonio Rubio, who performed like the frigid Youngstown, Ohio, temperatures had produced hypothermia in him sometime during his walk to the ring.

Despite the middling abilities of Jennings and Rubio, or maybe more accurately because of them, the wins for Cotto and Pavlik represented the successful end result of the science and art of The Comeback, brought to you in this instance by our friends at Top Rank, who remain the best of all promoters at nurturing young talent from birth through that deflowering process known as a first loss.

A true capitalist like any promoter, Top Rank President Todd duBoef sees this process as neither science nor art, but successful business modeling.

"I have a saying that goes with the way I do our business," duBoef told THE RING: "I don't chase the money, I create the money. That's about creating stars. If we are able to do our jobs as promoters and create assets like these fighters, that are our business, they are resilient. They're relying on us to create the opportunities. They're not relying on anyone else. And if I can create my business very well around every fighter I have, then I have a sustainable business.

"We have always believed that the perceived value [of our fighters] is determined by the public," duBoef continued. "And both of these guys are products of that philosophy; there was public appetite for both of them. When they happen to lose, it's not the end of the business; it's part of the business. It was a loss and a loss did not mean that our business with them stopped."

Not only did the business continue, it did so in such a way that is fairly unusual: the pay-per-view show aired from Madison Square Garden for Cotto's fight (and included that show's undercard), and then switched over to Youngstown for Pavlik in the main event. Though pay-per-view totals were unavailable at press time, both shows did well at the gate, with Cotto drawing 11,120 customers, and Pavlik selling out the Chevrolet Center's 7,228 seats. What recession?

In large measure because the venues in which the fights took place represented the headliners' home

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Cotto looked his old self, especially when he unleashed his devastating left hook. There seemed to be no ill effects from the nasty pounding he took from Antonio Margarito last year, but we will have to wait until he faces a sterner test before we know for sure.

turf, one suspects that few paying customers went home unhappy. Even those who braved the New York chill to root not for Cotto, but for John Duddy, who decisioned Matt Vanda on the undercard, scored a rare victory—a Duddy fight that did not feature their hero's plasma splashed around the arena like so much cheap beer. Still, Cotto's victory represented arguably the best performance of the night, particularly in light of the beating he took from Antonio Margarito last July.

"Miguel Cotto's performance was very good and very measured, and I think we saw evidence of some of the things he's done better in the past five or six fights, both defensively and in terms of how methodically he attacks," said veteran broadcast analyst Al Bernstein, who called the fights shown from New York.

Cotto, 28, of Caguas, Puerto Rico, started slowly, content to stalk Jennings, 31, of Lancashire, United Kingdom, and occasionally bang him with a hard jab. He fought with the confidence of a fighter who knows that he will catch up to his man eventually and when he does the fight will end.

The end began in the fourth when Cotto, 32-1 (27), scored one of those booming hooks of the sort Margarito walked through last July. Jennings, 34-2 (16), is no Margarito in the event you need reminding, and he promptly faltered. Hooks to the body dropped him twice, and in the next round, another hook to approximately the same spot set up Jennings for a right to the head that floored him for the third time and brought things to a close at the 2:38 mark.

Going in, Jennings seemed just the right foil for Cotto's comeback: never seen before in the United States, loser in 2006 to the hilariously named Young Mutley, and rated suspiciously and conveniently high by the WBO, for whose welterweight title this bout was contested, because, well, it had to be for some title or another, didn't it? Anyway, Jennings wasn't all that bad.

"I thought going in that Jennings, while not an upper-echelon welterweight, had some skills, knew how to fight, and his performance in the fight to some degree demonstrated that," said Bernstein.

"Jennings landed some right hands, which remains the Achilles heel of Cotto: A guy with a quick right hand who is committed to throwing it will land it, but the problem is, and here is what Jennings found, is that when you land the right hand, Cotto is quick enough with the left hook to counter. And if you get hit with a really good Cotto left hook, for the most part you're in trouble."

If Jennings was indeed the kind of good, but not too good fighter Bernstein describes, then his selection by Cotto's benefactors at Top Rank was a choice made in line with the thinking of other

veteran fight guys who also prescribe a safe but not entirely useless opponent for the first step in The Comeback.

"My philosophy is you can't put him in there with a guy who's a soft touch per se because if he knocks him out, it doesn't show you if he has anything left or not," said longtime manager Stan Hoffman, who currently handles welterweight prospect Delvin Rodriguez, among others.

"You've got to get him a couple of confidence-building fights if you can and he's got to have faith in himself because if he doesn't, it's all over. You've got to find guys who are not killers but will let you know if he's got anything left. Maybe you find a guy who's on the way down or just coming off a loss, too, or who, stylistically, is perfect for your guy. It's an enormous amount of work and you have to get out into the gym and find these guys."

If you get lucky, maybe you find out his loss was an aberration. Hoffman's point is you don't know unless you put your kid in with someone who can fight back a little.

PHOTOS BY MIKE GREENHILL

Pavlik dutifully pounded away on Rubio's head and body, but the Mexican veteran did very little to earn his purse, other than take a steady beating until the fight was stopped at the end of the ninth round.

PHOTOS BY MIKE GREENHILL

"There are always extenuating circumstances," he said. "Maybe when your kid lost he had an off day—we all have them—or he was fighting with his wife or girlfriend or was fasting for Yom Kippur or something, and until or unless you find out if he has anything left, you just don't know."

Former junior welterweight contender and fan-favorite extraordinaire Micky Ward had an up-and-down career that rendered him infinitely familiar with the rudiments of coming back after a loss. He subscribes to Hoffman's philosophy in the main, but stresses caution after a big loss.

"You want to get two good wins to build your confidence back and then go after a top-notch guy, unless you're getting paid real big money and then you do what you have to do," he advised.

"But even then you shouldn't do it. I did that too many times early in my career. I lost to three top-10 guys in a row when I wasn't ready. Why? I was asked to fight them and I didn't want to say no. I should have. You have to build up your confidence. That's the important thing.

"You should find somebody who's decent, not a terrible guy, but someone you will beat in a good fight. Someone you've got a 60-40 chance to beat or 70-30. It doesn't have to be 99-1 or 100-0, but you don't want to go right back in against a top guy. You don't want to be in wars every time like I was."

Then there's the strategy of taking a seeming risk against an upper-level guy because you believe your fighter, despite a loss last time out, has the tools and style to beat him. Ivaylo Gotzev, the manager of heavyweight contender Sam Peter, was criticized in many quarters for pursuing a fight against prospect Eddie Chambers right after Peter's horrid loss to Vitali Klitschko. You will know the outcome of that match by the time you read this, but Gotzev will have no regrets either way.

"A lot of experts have told me I'm crazy for putting Sam in there with Eddie Chambers, but if you take a risk and end up winning, it makes the win more valuable," said Gotzev. "I rely on my skills as a matchmaker. It's a calculated risk. Style-wise, Chambers is a handpicked opponent, but he has recognition as a good fighter. I rely on my knowledge of Sam's strengths and weaknesses; I've known him forever. You've got to know your fighter. I could give Sam a couple of stiffs and build him back up, but that's not the way it's going to happen here."

That Rubio, 28, was Pavlik's alphabet mandatory worked out well for Pavlik and for Top Rank: They got an under-qualified guy and appeased the sanctioning body at the same time. According to duBoef, it was important to Pavlik to keep the alphabet titles (he must like paying sanctioning fees), so for

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Although Englishman Jennings put up a better fight than Rubio, in the end he simply could not deal with Cotto's left hooks to the body. He was counted out at the 2:38 mark of the fifth round, much to the delight of the thousands of loyal Cotto fans at Madison Square Garden.

DON'T MISS WILLIAM DETTLOFF

EVERY MONDAY ... EXCLUSIVELY ON:

ringtv.com

Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, The Ring's senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

The effects of steroids: If steroids compelled men to kill their families, the terrible sound of James Toney, married father of six, slinging deviled eggs down his throat would right now be echoing throughout his otherwise silent, corpse-strewn house.

Post-fight interviews: If you too were wondering why Vic Darchinyan made no real sense five minutes after getting pancaked, consider that five minutes before, he'd gotten pancaked. Why are people always surprised when a fighter who's just suffered a concussion says nonsensical things?

The white stuff: If you've never seen (Alexander) Povetkin, picture mayonnaise in short pants and gloves. This guy is so white he makes Sultan Ibragimov look like Wesley Snipes.

Dettloff on ringtv.com ... The perfect way to answer the week's opening bell!

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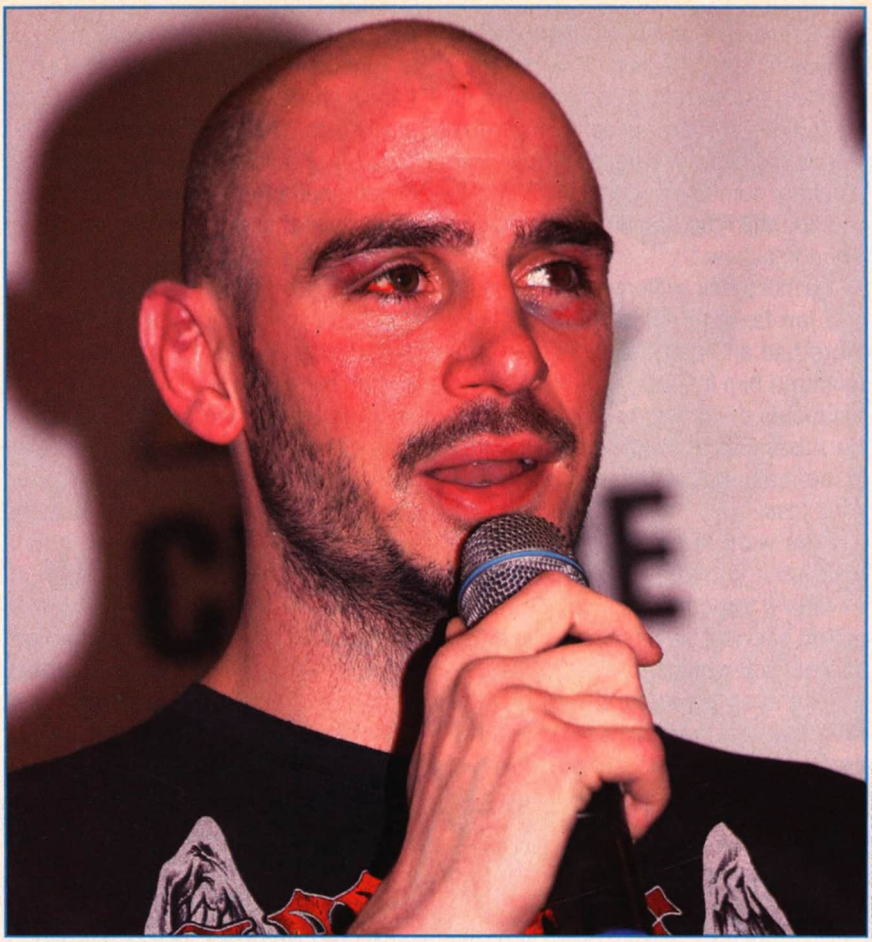

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Although Pavlik looks like he's been in a tough fight, his TKO of reluctant Rubio was totally one-sided. The victory certainly pleased his Youngstown fans and probably boosted the middleweight champ's confidence, but proved next to nothing.

them it was a win-win. And Rubio's non-performance made it a win-win-win.

Rubio, 43-5-1 (37), began the fight by cowering, and when that didn't work, he cowered some more. This gave Pavlik, 35-1 (31) and making the second defense of the world middleweight title, the opportunity to stride right in and rake Rubio with powerpunches.

Rubio, Torreon, Mexico, worked up enough gumption to move his hands in the sixth, but that was it, and when he quit on his stool after the ninth round, Pavlik, 26, thanked his fans and told the press, "I feel great. I put the loss [to Bernard Hopkins] behind me."

(One is forced to wonder if this is what analyst Nick Charles meant when, during the pay-per-view telecast, he observed that the win "wiped" from Pavlik's mind the memory of the loss to Hopkins, as if the middleweight champion had been lobotomized between rounds. But we digress.)

It was a solid, if somewhat ordinary performance from Pavlik, who has excited the masses with big knockouts and exciting exchanges. This night featured neither, though one couldn't reasonably blame him for that.

"Kelly Pavlik does a lot of things very well in the ring. He's very good," Bernstein said. "And when he can do those things—be a linear fighter, use his jab, use his right hand—which he can, I think, against somewhere between 80 and 95 percent of the people he's going to face, he's very effective. It's very tough to beat him. What he showed against Rubio only confirms that assessment."

So bigger things await Cotto and Pavlik, and better opponents too. Their comebacks are well underway, their damaged psyches healing already by welcome virtue of the cheers of fans all too ready to forgive their recent failings. They know now what it's like to lose at the highest level of this business. Now they know they can survive it. They also know it's better to win. ■

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Andre Berto

"I Know Where I Am And Where I'm Headed"

To those closest to him, he's Michael, the headstrong, independent, do-what-he-wants-when-he-wants young man. To the rest of us, he's Andre Berto, a budding welterweight who owns a title belt and is poised to make a breakthrough as one of the sport's next young superstars. It's something the 25-year-old Berto has envisioned since he was a kid jotting down goals and dreams on his myriad notepads.

Right now, Berto, 24-0 (19), is well on his way to accomplishing his objectives. He's rated number seven by THE RING at welterweight, which could arguably be boxing's most talent-laden division, featuring Shane Mosley, Antonio Margarito, Miguel Cotto, Joshua Clottey, and the hovering possibility that Floyd Mayweather may return.

Such a wide array of attractive opponents could certainly create a number of lucrative opportunities for the WBC titleholder, but Berto would not be in this position if he had not beaten veteran contender Luis Collazo to start 2009. Berto's close but unanimous 12-round decision victory delighted fans, but besides his many strengths, the fight also revealed areas in which Berto needs to improve.

A month after the Collazo victory, THE RING Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito visited with Berto at the New York City offices of his promoter, Lou DiBella. The Winter Haven, Florida, resident was still recuperating from the weeklong fun that was the Super Bowl in Tampa, where he made paid appearances at several functions.

Berto spoke about the Collazo fight and its ramifications, growing up in Winter Haven, the child of Haitian parents, the evolving relationship with his father, his Olympic experience, dealing with the trappings of celebrity, and the foundation of his willpower.

Santoliquito reports: "Andre is a very likable and genuine person. He'll laugh at himself and admit his mistakes, which makes him refreshing in today's superficial, image-is-everything sports world. He makes himself available to fans, to the media, and it's easy to understand why his popularity is rapidly growing. You get the impression that he wants to not only continue to grow as a fighter, but also as a person. He's enjoying his success, but will never be satisfied until he reaches the pinnacle of his profession."

The Ring: Did you think you won the Collazo fight handily, or was there some doubt?

Andre Berto: I think I won the fight handily. I just feel that I was in a position where no one saw me in a close fight like that before, and that's when some criticism arose. It wasn't in the fashion that I wanted to win it, but I went into that fight with certain issues. I was happy it was an exciting fight for the fans, but I don't know if I'd say it was an exciting fight for me though (*laughs*).

The Ring: What issues?

AB: I caught a real bad flu four or five days before the fight. There was even some talk about the fight being postponed. But I wasn't about to let that happen. I stayed juiced up with medication and made sure everything was clear and made sure I got the job done. We kept it quiet. My camp didn't want to inform anyone what was going on, and I'm not the type to fall back on certain commitments. There've been times in my career when I've sprained my ankle running or hurt my hand sparring before a fight, and I still fought.

The Ring: Were you surprised by the backlash as to who won the fight?

AB: No, I wasn't surprised by the backlash, because going into the fight there were so many high expectations placed on me. I knew with every great performance that I have, expectations are going to be higher and higher for me. If I would have knocked Collazo out, that might not have even been good enough (*laughs*), because that was supposed to happen. I'm winning and people are starting to know who I am. This is the nest that I built for myself. It comes with the position of where I am right now.

The Ring: What was difficult about that Collazo fight?

AB: I felt that I made the Collazo fight tougher than it should have been. I should have stayed outside more than

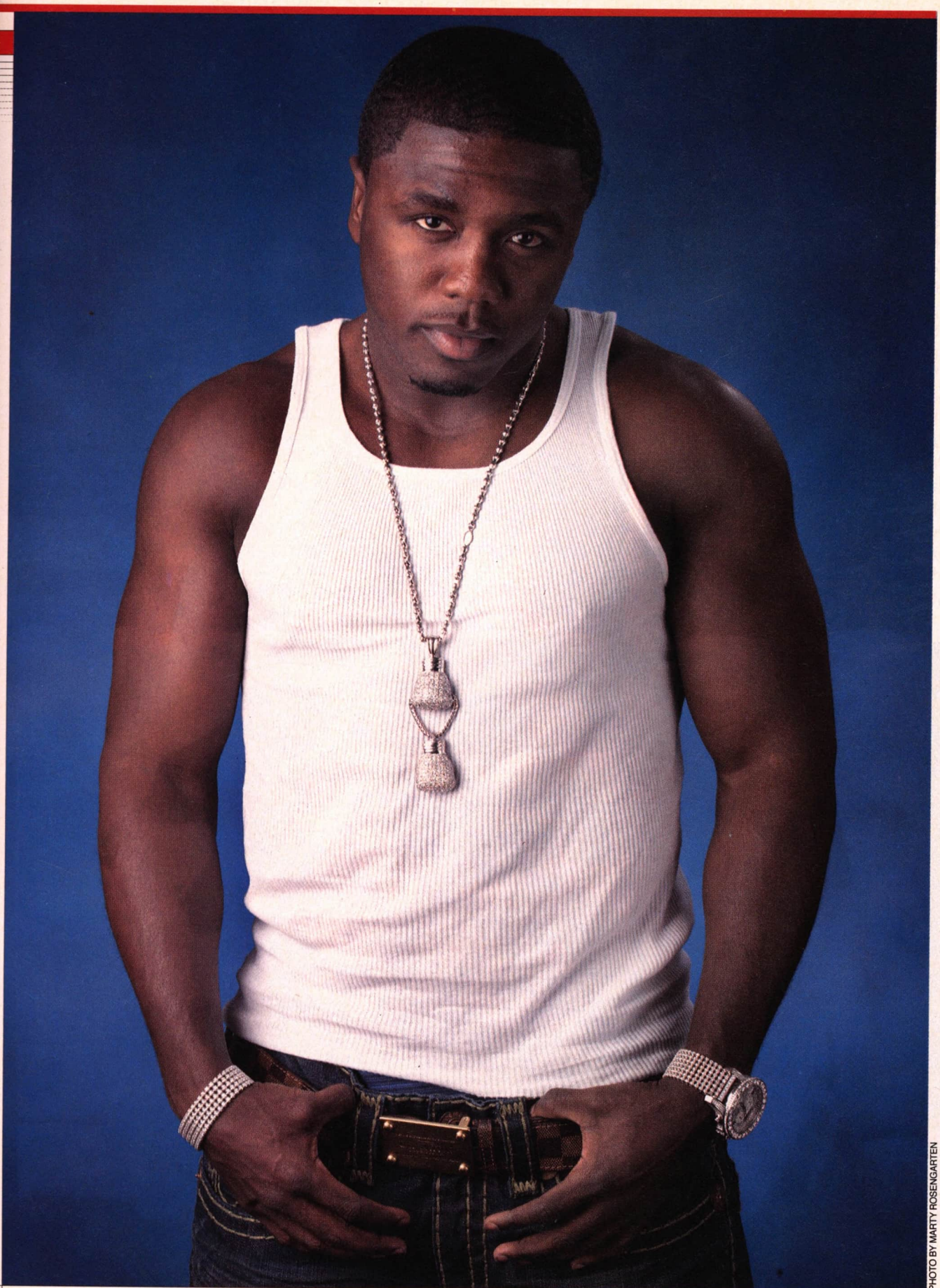

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

I did, boxed more, and used my speed to beat him. I let him dictate the pace a little bit. I didn't have the same energy and drive that I usually have for fights. I was in there being lazy. It just wasn't me that night. I still beat a ranked guy. That's the thing about me, I still feel within myself I should just dominate. Hey, Collazo gave Ricky Hatton hell. He's a slick, veteran southpaw and I'm this 25-year-old kid. But I didn't see it that way. I'm winning and there are people out there comparing me to Shane Mosley and Sugar Ray Leonard (*laughs*).

The Ring: Is there pressure that comes with being compared to guys like that this early in your career?

AB: A lot of people tend to forget that I'm 25 and I just turned pro, and I'm already being compared to Shane Mosley and Sugar Ray Leonard. That only the top, top guys can test me, like Antonio Margarito or Miguel Cotto or Shane. It's a compliment and a curse (*laughs*), because people expect me to squash everyone I face. It's up to me to listen to the compliments and keep moving forward. You can't get caught up in it, but it's tough either way. It sounds good to hear the nice things, but at the end of the day, to listen and take it in will eventually destroy you. You can't believe it.

The Ring: Why can't you believe it?

AB: I suppose maybe you can believe it (*laughs*), but you have to understand where you are, how good you are. You can't believe you're better than you actually are. I guess what I meant to say was "you can't *always* believe it" (*laughs*). Those same people that are building you up will tear you down once you get your ass beat. The same media that had you beating Sugar Ray Robinson and Sugar Ray Leonard after you look good in one fight will kill you and break you down if you look like s___ the next. A lot of people don't know how to handle success. This boxing game can make you or break you mentally.

The Ring: What has surprised you most as a pro?

AB: Time. You never seem to have enough time anymore. It's tougher dealing with everything that comes with being in the position that I'm in. You can't just be a good fighter, you have to play a certain role. You have to satisfy the fans, satisfy the media. There is a lot to do even getting ready for a fight. As an amateur, you just get weighed and then you fight (*laughs*). As a pro, there are a lot of things that can distract you in what you're doing—everything from money to girls to feeling you're obligated to do so many things for so many people. There is so much to handle. When I started winning, when my name started getting bigger, I had family I never met coming out of the woodwork and old friends from high school. They embrace my success. There is some jealousy too. People think because of where I am that I'm not the same person. They think it's easy, like everything is wonderful. It is, but there is a lot that comes with it.

The Ring: What more have you learned about yourself?

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Berto drives a left into Luis Collazo's midsection en route to a close 12-round decision over his toughest opponent to date. Berto was rocked in the first round and also withstood Collazo's rally in the ninth and 10th rounds before prevailing.

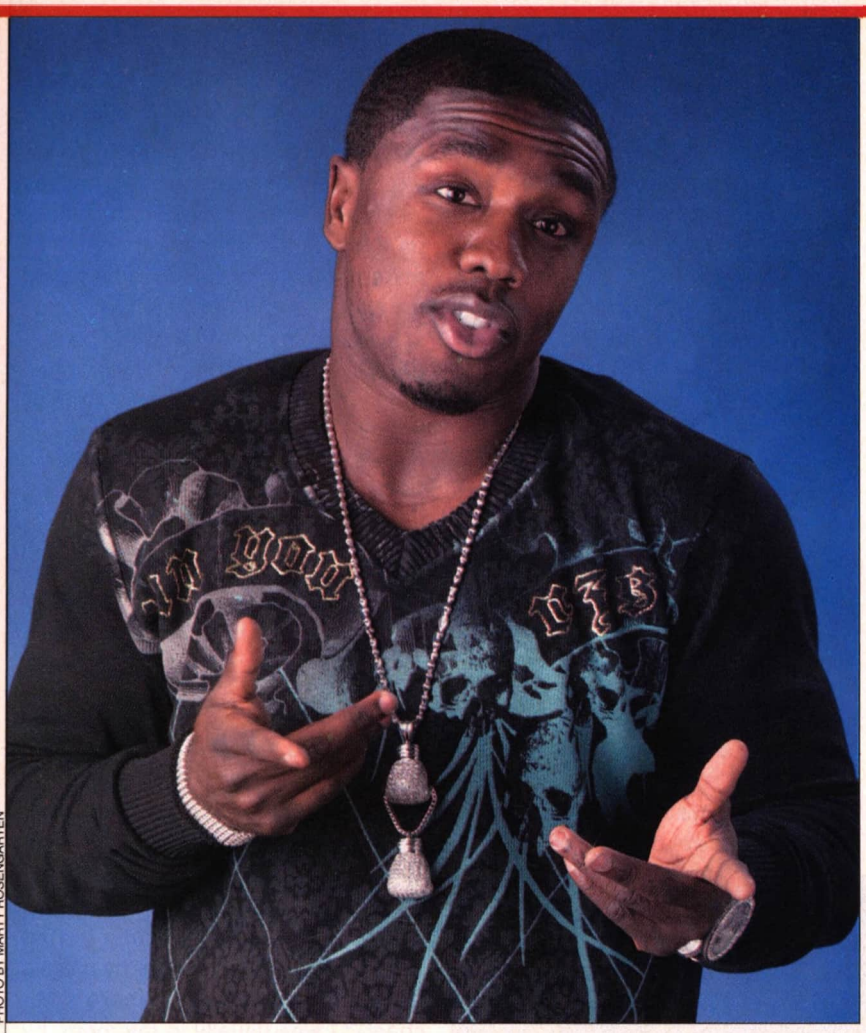

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"Those same people that are building you up will tear you down once you get your ass beat. The same media that had you beating Sugar Ray Robinson and Sugar Ray Leonard after you look good in one fight will kill you and break you down if you look like s___ the next."

AB: I think I'm a stronger person than I thought. I've learned to balance a lot of things in my life. I went from being a young kid always wishing for myself to reach this point, and praying for it. But at the same time, I thought I'd be able to handle everything (*laughs*). I brace myself mentally and prepare for everything that's coming at me now. I remember to tell myself to just be strong. But the most important thing is a balance—not too high, not too low. If you don't have that, you get messed up. Look at someone like Mike Tyson, someone caught in a whirlwind, following everyone else, and being followed by everyone. He had the money, fame, everything that comes with it. All of sudden, when Tyson wasn't the man, all the money, the fame, the women, the people, his mansions, and his cars are gone. Now he's sitting in his house looking crazy (*laughs*). That's sad to see. I love Tyson to death, but he's a perfect example of someone you watch who lost his dream, someone who lost his balance.

The Ring: It's like losing who you actually are, right?

AB: Exactly! A lot of people don't know who they are. You can grow up to be a certain person with morals and values, but once you taste that limelight, everything changes. You get certain people come around you, exposing you to different types of lifestyles, and it's easy to forget who you are and that you're supposed to be a certain way. You let the success drive you, instead of you driving the success. I want to drive the success I've achieved.

I always said to myself that I'm the type of guy who is a thinking man. I'll go home for two or three days by myself after a fight and keep a notepad with me and write everything down. Just two or three days by myself to think about what happened. I don't need friends trying to blow my head up. I put things in a perspective that I can understand. I know where I am and where I'm headed. I have to do it on my terms. The expectations get so high. I can train my ass off, it's still like I'm fighting King Kong or something. I do things on my terms, no one else's. I'll listen, and I've always been a good listener, but if it doesn't add up, I go back to what I originally thought.

The Ring: You thought you were supposed to fight Shane Mosley. Did you catch a break by not facing the Shane Mosley that beat Margarito?

AB: If it was the Shane Mosley that fought and beat up on Margarito, and if I was the same Andre Berto that fought Luis Collazo, I definitely caught a break (*laughs*). Hey, I'm a realist. I wasn't 100 percent against Collazo, and for a guy like Shane, you have to be 100 percent. Against Margarito, Shane was sharp. Physically, I was 60 percent when I fought Collazo. I knew what was going to happen when Shane fought Margarito. Margarito's style was perfect for Shane. Shane is extremely fast and accurate. He's a great pro and someone I've always looked up to as amateur. I'm honored to be mentioned with someone like Shane not only because of how he fights, but the classy way he is out of the ring. Besides, Margarito was way too slow for Shane. Margarito can take

a punch, which makes him feel like he can make mistakes. Shane taught him otherwise.

The Ring: Were you shocked by the Margarito hand wrap controversy?

AB: I was shocked to hear it. Then again, Margarito didn't seem as if he had anything on his punches. He tapped Cotto and Cotto was all over the place. He never moved Shane. Nothing seemed to hurt Shane at all. But every time Margarito hit Cotto, it looked like he was going to kill him, like he was throwing bricks at him.

The Ring: Let's talk about the relationship with your father. A lot of father-son teams don't work. Yours has. Why?

AB: My father isn't my boxing trainer; he's my *life* trainer. He pushes me in every aspect of my life. My father brought me into boxing. He's trained me since I was younger. I wouldn't be where I am without my father. But there is a line drawn there that only people close to me see. We're way too much alike (*laughs*). We used to bump heads on a regular basis. We're two intense, dominant males in the household. Alpha males. My pops was so dominant, everything he wanted to do he just went out and did. I was so much like him that I wanted to prove to him wrong so badly at a young age. I wanted to show that I was equal to him for some reason (*laughs*). I was young, six, maybe seven years old and I wanted to show Pops that I was a man, and that he never had to worry about me.

The Ring: Did that lead to some trouble?

AB: One time I wanted to show him that I was just as capable as he was. I cut grass every summer just to get money. I used to save and hide my money in a mattress (*laughs*). My parents are from the Caribbean and they always thought kids shouldn't have money, especially young kids. But I had saved $1,500 to $2,000 over two years by just hustling, mowing lawns, working at a boys club selling candy. I did anything legal a kid that age could do for a dollar. I had this wad of money in a brown paper bag and I took it to a bank (*laughs*). I'm a 13-year-old kid trying to open an account. I had no idea what I was doing. I dumped the money on the counter and gave the teller all my personal information. She called my father (*laughs*), and the next thing I know, there's my father at the bank—heated, pissed, furious. He grabbed the bag and asked me where I got all of that money. He didn't know I saved that much money. I think I got spared a beating that time though (*laughs*). My mother saw I was upset, because my parents knew I liked to do stuff on my own. I never got the money back. I think my mother still has it (*laughs*).

The Ring: Apparently, you wanted your independence at an early age.

AB: Oh, yeah. I was the first of my brothers and sisters to move out and buy a house at a young age, when I was 22. I was the first of all seven of us to move out, but my family wasn't that surprised. They could see I was a lot different. Our family atmosphere was everyone in the living room, but I'd always be off on the side or by myself. My family would ask, "Where's Michael?" I was usually in my room, by myself. I kept these notepads with me constantly, writing down future things I wanted to do, goals and different ambitions. I'd write down ideas. My father always said that there was something different about me (*laughs*).

The Ring: Do you think having your father involved in your career is something that will work over the long haul? After all, Mosley fired his father twice.

AB: I think it can work. You have to let everyone know what their role is; everyone has to have their place. My father is my father, and with our chemistry we probably wouldn't completely click. My father will always push me and be on my ass when he thinks I'm up in space. He'll bring me down and encourage me. My family will always be there for me, but me and my father keep a comfortable distance. We understand each other better. He's come to accept the type of person that I am—just like him (*laughs*).

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Berto takes a punch in the mouth from Cosme Rivera during their July 2007 bout in which he was knocked down in the sixth round. Although Berto got up and went on to win a 10-round decision, it raised questions about his chin that still have not been completely answered.

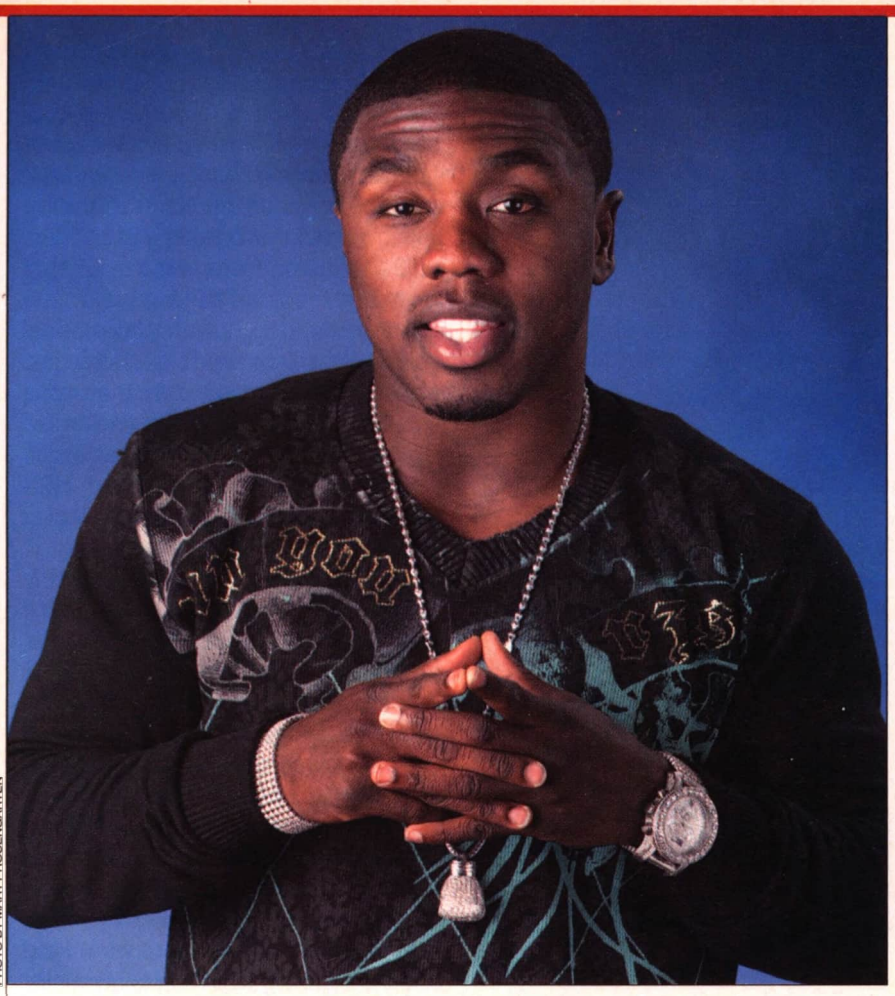

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"I do things on my terms, no one else's. I'll listen, and I've always been a good listener, but if it doesn't add up, I go back to what I originally thought."

I'll jet off to Los Angeles and handle my business, make sure my family is taken care of, my father, my sisters, and my brothers. I want my boxing career to help lift some of the weight off them. I have a six-year-old younger brother, Noah. That kid is spoiled rotten. He's almost like *my* son (*laughs*). He's living the good life. He gets everything he wants, nice name-brand stuff. I give him things because I didn't have those things growing up. I'm the first one everyone calls for Christmas and birthdays. I know what it was like growing up without anything. I'm able to do that for my family now.

The Ring: How tough did you have it growing up?

AB: I grew up with two Haitian immigrant parents. My father used to pick fruit and my mother did housekeeping. My brother Edson was still in Haiti, but me and my brother Cleveland would be in the house all day or just in the neighborhood. This was at a young age. I was five, walking to school, and right from school I'd go straight to the boys club, which was across the street from the school. That was every day, school and the boys club. We'd be there all day. On weekends there was a chance to interact with my parents.

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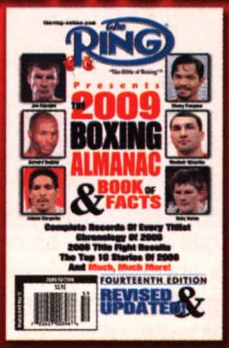

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That was a normal routine. Well, normal for us.

I remember my mother was tired as hell all the time from standing up all day. Her feet were swollen, and then she'd cook for us for two more hours. My parents would try their hardest to buy us nice stuff for Christmas, but sometimes we didn't get anything. We had teachers in school ask us what we'd gotten for Christmas, and my mother would tell us never tell them you got nothing, make something up. We wanted to feel normal, like the other kids. But there were so many people who we grew up with who were poor like us. No one would point out that we were poor. I was popular because of athletics and the kid everyone gravitated toward.

But I'd come back home and see my parents wiped out. I remember we used to soak and message my mother's feet. My father used to be gone on a regular basis. He used to work at Perkins restaurant as a cook after picking fruit all day. My father was easily working 16-, 18-hour days. My father owns his own martial arts studio now, but you don't forget those times. I remember all of it. Once he quit all of that, he never went to work for anyone else again.

The Ring: So you're not afraid of hard work, are you?

AB: I'm not afraid of it. But I could never see myself working nine to five, because I always had a vision of doing something huge, being on TV where everyone pointed to me, playing a sport, whether it was boxing or football, some sort of entertainment. I'm not someone who is a stranger to hard work. I would never dis a maid or a cook. Hard work was part of my life. My father used to make up these activities for us to work out. He'd get a stack of pennies, and for every penny, we had to do 25 pushups. Twenty-five pushups all for a penny (*laughs*). The floor would be drenched in sweat after we'd be done. We'd do squats and pushups or we'd pull weeds all day until my mother would get home at six o'clock. If I ever got in trouble in school, my father would have me do 500 pushups and 500 squats before I even went to school. He'd wake me up at five in the morning, and I'd be in school sore and looking crazy. He'd wake us up and I'd be ready to cry. But I'd still get in trouble (*laughs*). I wanted to be a class clown and go against the grain. I used to get in trouble just making everyone laugh (*laughs*). But I knew what was coming when I got home. I knew I'd get a beating, but I still did it. I was hardheaded. I sacrificed myself for everyone else to get a laugh.

The Ring: What's the most ridiculous thing you did to get in trouble?

AB: It wasn't anything bad. My father used to travel all the time when he got into the fight game. He'd go to Japan for weeks, and I had to be around 14 then. That was the time me and my brothers would wild out. Pops was away and the fair came to town. I told my mother I was going to an amateur boxing tournament with my coach Tony (Morgan, who still helps train Berto today). I left with friends from school and we ran amuck over the whole town. I didn't check in with my mother and I was gone all day.

So I'm sitting there, and it's 10, 11 at night and I just felt this big hand grab me from behind. I was just embarrassed. It's my coach, Tony, and he just starts yelling and screaming at me. I was scared to death. My mother called Coach Tony and she went crazy when she found out I wasn't with him. I got the beating of a lifetime (*mimicking punches raining down on him*).

My father called from Japan, and my mother told him what happened. He told me I was going to get a beating when he got back. I worked all day the next day and made sure my mother could see I was doing something to work it off (*laughs*). I was waiting for my father to come home. He was the type that you knew it was him by the way he slammed the door. As soon as we heard the door closed a certain way, we knew if he was in a bad mood or not. I got away with it. He just talked to me about what I did and the big thing was lying to my mother. That was the worst of it. Whew! (*laughs and wipes his brow*)

The Ring: What was it like growing up in Winter Haven?

AB: That was pretty rough. Polk County was like the capital of methamphetamine. When I was a teenager, Winter Haven was one of the highest areas of the country for STDs (sexually transmitted diseases). In the movie *Cocaine Cowboys* they flew their stuff out of Polk County. I know of at least six guys that I was personally close with that are in jail right now for either murder or drug situations. There are six or seven people that I knew that are dead from drugs or just being involved in the streets and getting shot. My pops used to always say we see so many talented kids lose themselves in the streets. He always said the saddest thing was wasted talent. I would see it constantly.

PHOTO BY JOE KLAMAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Berto (left) lost a close 36-34 fight against France's Xavier Noel during the 2004 Olympics. Berto was forced to represent Haiti when he didn't make the U.S. team due to a weird disqualification loss during the Olympic Trials.

But we also had Amare Stoudemire, Ray Lewis, Tracy McGrady, Chauncey Davis, they're all from my area—and they're all pro stars. They made it.

That's what I also grew up around. I was athletic in high school, the homecoming king. I had visions at a young age that have never stopped. This vision was not to be a product of my environment. I was going to be the one who stepped out. I didn't want to be a product of my environment; my environment was going to be a product of me.

The Ring: How did that shape you?

AB: You see so much of it that you became immune to it. It got to a point that they had these things called Pride Talks at the boys club, and these guys who made it, Ray Lewis, Tracy McGrady, guys like that, would come back and talk to the kids. I used to be zoned into what they said, when the other kids would laugh it off, not pay attention, or fall asleep. I wanted to be one of the guys who comes back to give a Pride Talk.

After I started winning all these national tournaments, I was still around the drugs dealers and the murderers. But everyone in town knew who I was, and I started to get respect. I used to be known as the kid who ran everywhere. They used to call me Forrest Gump (*laughs*). They'd see me running and working out so much that even the drugs dealers and thieves started to respect it. You had guys standing up for me, telling other people to leave me alone, saying I was going to be the champ one day. I was embraced by the negative guys and embraced by people who made it. I was in the middle, but that was a good feeling. I got to live in every aspect. I think that's why I'm appreciated more at home, because they saw me running everywhere and saw the work and commitment that placed where I am today.

The Ring: Talk about the welterweights rated above you whom you think you're ready for.

AB: Realistically, I think I can compete with every one of them. The process I'm in now is taking the right steps and taking care of the gatekeepers. I'm ready to go through the whole process. I'm able to compete with any of them: Mosley, Margarito, Cotto, any of them.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"My father will always push me and be on my ass when he thinks I'm up in space. He'll bring me down and encourage me. My family will always be there for me, but me and my father keep a comfortable distance. We understand each other better. He's come to accept the type of person that I am—just like him."

The Ring: Let's talk about your chin. Any concerns there?

AB: Collazo woke me up real quick in the first round. That surprised me. Otherwise, I feel good about my chin. I took a lot of shots against Collazo and stayed up. I was knocked down once so far, by Cosme Rivera, but look at some of the other guys that have tasted the canvas. Joe Calzaghe was knocked down by Bernard Hopkins and Roy Jones. Felix Trinidad was knocked down all of the time and came back and won. I was stunned against Collazo. Rivera stunned me. What really matters is if you get hit and don't get up. For me, it's like I'm still learning on the job, what kind of punch I can take or not. One thing is for certain: If you don't know who you are, you sure find out fast in boxing (*laughs*).

The Ring: What did you learn from the Rivera fight?

AB: Just basically never underestimate an opponent and never get careless with a veteran, to always stay alert and ready.

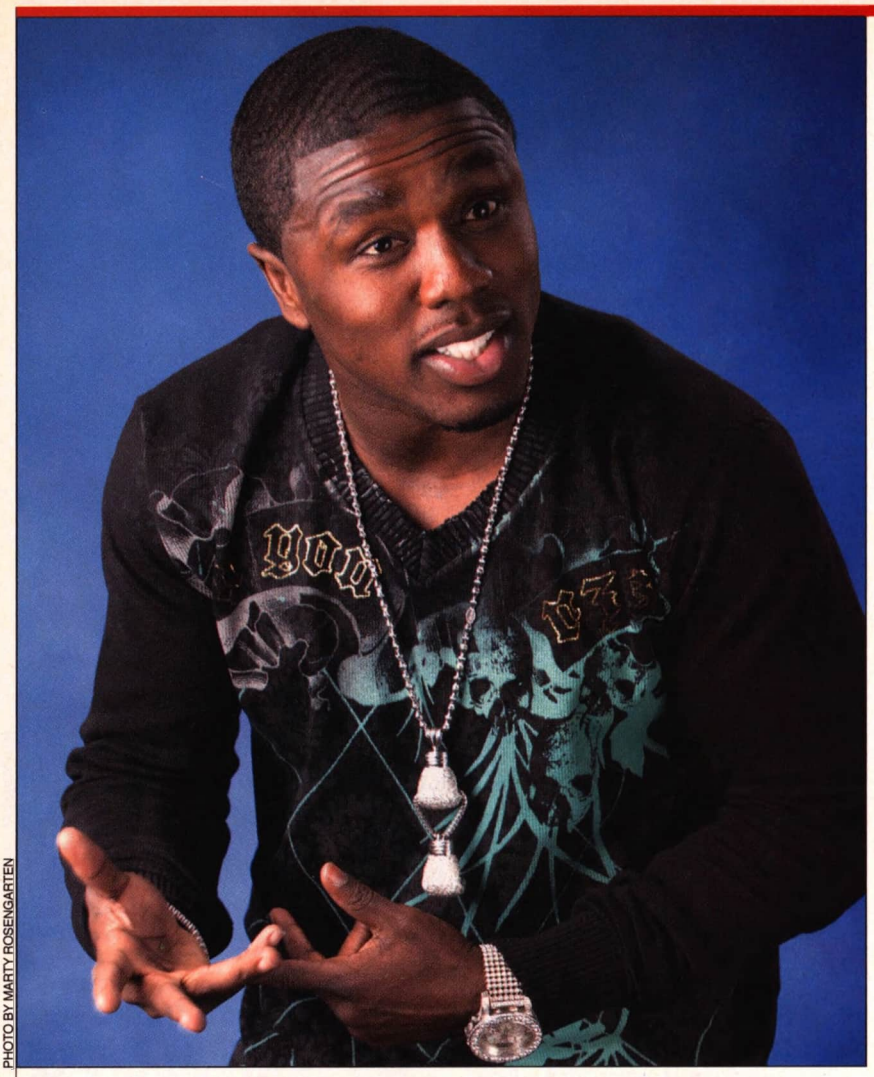

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"You have to make sure all your fights get remembered. I owe that to all the fans who show me love and embrace me. Once I step into my domain, the ring, it's my chance to show love back."

The Ring: I understand you were you going through some personal problems while preparing for the Rivera fight that hampered you.

AB: I was in training camp and I got a call about a friend of mine. He wound up killing someone. This was someone I just saw a few days before I left for camp. It was like there was no other way out; his life was done. That hit me because he was someone I was trying to help make a change in his life. He tried to get away from the street life, but got dragged into it. Now he's done. That affected me in training camp. I really took it to heart. I knew he was a good kid. I knew that wasn't in him to do something like that.

The Ring: You had the unique opportunity of representing your parents' nation of Haiti. What was it like at the 2004 Games in Athens, Greece?

AB: That was bittersweet for me. I had been on some U.S. national team since I was 15. Hell, I traveled to 22 countries with the U.S. team, and you'd get all of this free stuff from the big sponsors. But when I didn't make the U.S. team, I reached out to the Haitian team. It's just a crazy road that got me there.

The Ring: How crazy?

AB: When I went to the U.S. Olympic Trials, I was the number-one seed (at 152 pounds) and Juan McPherson, from Cleveland, Ohio, was number two. We were expecting to meet each other in the finals, but instead we drew each other in the first round. I was in ridiculous shape, training with Winky Wright getting ready for McPherson, who was a tall southpaw. I was up on points going into the last round, but I tried to knock him out. I nailed him with a punch, he hung on, and we got tangled up. I was trying to get him off of me. I knew he was in trouble because he was going down when he grabbed me. I just slung him to the side and he acted like he had no legs and fell straight to the floor. I got disqualified. The kicker is, we filed a grievance. The trial judges watched a replay tape and I was reinstated the next day, and won out and made the team. I thought I was going to Athens for the U.S. But I remember McPherson playing up the whole throwing thing. They came and pulled him out of the ring on a stretcher, with a neck brace (*laughs*). McPherson protested me being reinstated. Lawyers were involved. Lawsuits were threatened. The funny thing is that they disqualified both of us. It was nuts (*laughs*).

The Ring: How did you wind up on the Haitian team?

AB: The first suggestion came from Shelly Finkel, of all people, who was trying to sign me. After the mess with the U.S. team, Finkel mentioned to me and my father about fighting for the Haitian team at the Olympics. They were forming a team and my father got in contact with someone there. We had Haitian guys from Miami, France, from Canada. We all went to the qualifier in Mexico, and I was the only one who won from the Haitian team. I was a one-man team. They asked me to carry the flag. There were five or six of us who represented the country of Haiti. I walked into

the opening ceremony and it was a crazy experience to go through all of that just to achieve a dream. My father was there and it might have been a bigger deal for him than it was to me. I made history, as the first boxer to ever compete in the Olympics from Haiti.

The funny thing is, I never stepped foot in Haiti. I always heard about Haiti from my parents. Now I was representing the country. We didn't even have any uniforms. I had to scramble to get everything I could. I went from Team U.S.A., which offered everything and anything, to running around begging sponsors for sweatsuits, anything we could find.

The Ring: Do you know much about Haitian fighters?

AB: I don't know if there was ever a great fighter from Haiti. I guess I'm going to have to be the first (*laughs*).

The Ring: In all this time, with your parents from Haiti, you've never been to Haiti?

AB: (*bellowing laugh*) Nope, never been to Haiti. But I'm planning to go soon. I have dual citizenship even though I was never there. But I get a sense of Haiti every time I hear my mother speak. My mother still has that thick Haitian accent. My father lost his accent. It only comes out when he gets mad (*laughs*). Seriously, I do feel a connection to Haiti. I grew up with both cultures. I grew up eating Haitian food. I understand and know the history of Haiti and know the Haitian language. It's such a strong culture and there is so much behind it. I know it was the first independent nation in the Caribbean, and it was 1804 when the country was declared independent. It's one of the strongest countries in the Caribbean. I'd like to go there and embrace the Haitian people. At the same time I am American and Haiti is looking for a sports star. I think Wyclef Jean might be the closest thing Haiti has to a big-time celebrity.

The Ring: What fighters did you grow up admiring as a kid?

AB: I loved Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler. I loved watching them. I was a huge Mike Tyson fan. I used to watch a lot of old Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson fights on tape. But my all-time favorite is probably Tyson, just because of the way he was in the ring. Tyson had this aura around him every time he was about to fight. I remember people getting off early from work just to get ready to watch a Tyson fight. You couldn't miss anything. There won't be anyone like him for a while. I see why he has fans still to this day.

The Ring: It seems like your status is blowing up. You were even in demand during Super Bowl week in Tampa, right?

AB: I love people. I'm the type of guy that if I go in there and perform, that's what it's all about. And people have been noticing. I'm an entertainer and if I don't entertain and put on a good fight, it's a lost night. I don't want to go in the ring, look like s___, and then collect a check. That's why I'm my biggest critic. It goes back to watching guys like Hagler and Tyson. To this day they're loved. You have to make sure all your fights get remembered. I owe that to all the fans who show me love and embrace me. Once I step into my domain, the ring, it's my chance to show love back.

The Ring: You're living the life, aren't you?

AB: I am. I have no kids, not married. I'm enjoying being 25. I don't really think I've done too much yet; there is so much more that I want to accomplish. The visions I had as a kid entailed so much more. I've seen all of this coming, and that's why I'm not so crazy about it. I realize so many more people are happier for me than I am for myself. I'm never satisfied. That's my problem. I'm my biggest critic and never satisfied. I won't be comfortable until I'm done. Then I'll look back on the write-ups and success, and think I did all right for myself. Right now, it's too dangerous to be comfortable. My father is the same way. My father and Oscar De La Hoya's father are pretty much the same people, though my father probably shows a little more emotion than Oscar's. My father embraces me now. I guess I'm his Mini-Me; I'm Mini-Pops (*laughs*). There's going to be a time when I come into the house and my kids will know what kind of mood Daddy is in by the way I slam the door. ■

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May 1986: Hagler vs. Mugabi: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Bramble-Crawley, Tyson-Ferguson, 10 worst decisions.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new Ring ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

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Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Lockridge & Mayweather, Tony Burton, Julio Cesar Chavez, blood.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

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Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

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PIECE OF (CRAB) CAKE

Easy Victory Over Arce Has Darchinyan Looking Upward

By Ivan Goldman
PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

Vic Darchinyan is without question the greatest 115-pound pugilist to ever fight out of what appears to be the stance of a left-handed crab. And he's possibly the only one ever to rely on a left uppercut from the outside—a shot that not only horrifies purists, but also defies logic, reason, and the laws of physics. For him, it works like a charm.

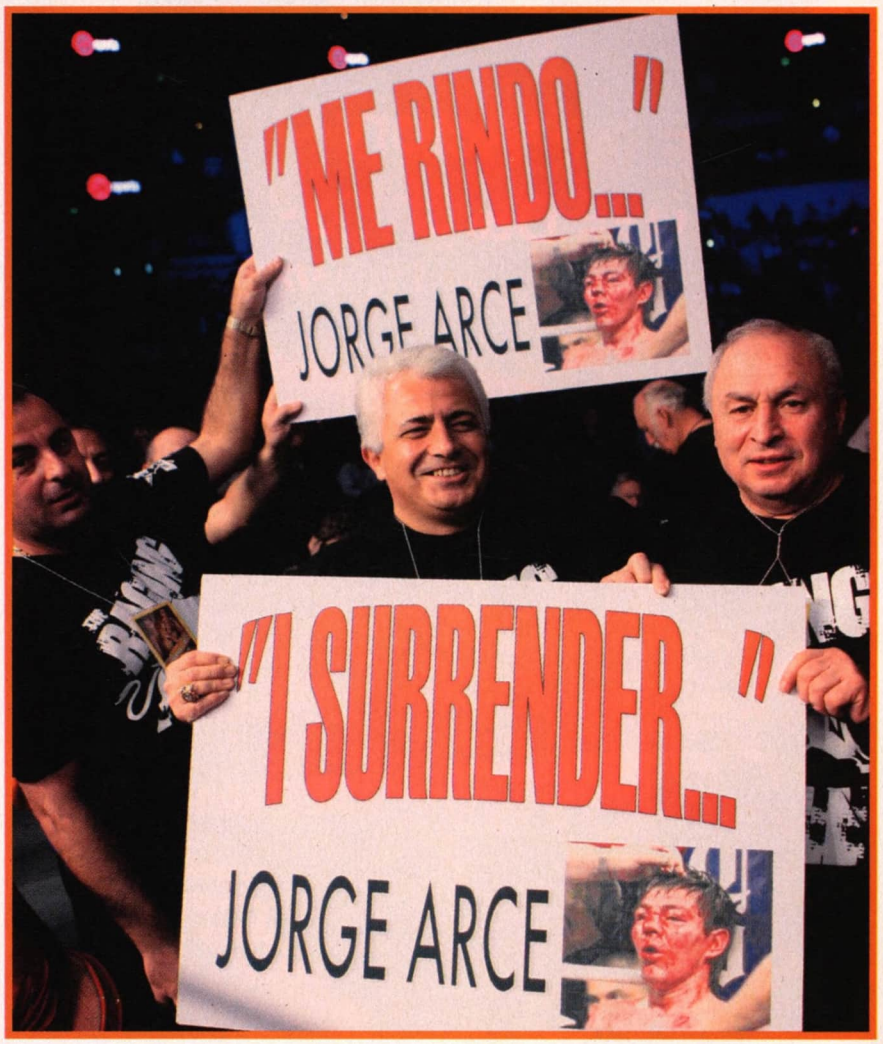
All of which makes him fun to watch, particularly since he's a junior bantam who strikes with the kind of force—*Pow! Ka-boom! Ka-smash!*—illustrated in superhero comic books and with a level of speed and deception that makes him extremely difficult to counter or figure out … or to beat.

Darchinyan unleashes his pet punch, a fierce left uppercut that he frequently throws from the outside, which is widely considered a technical no-no but a move that works very well for the unorthodox "Raging Bull."

Darchinyan speaks wistfully of wreaking vengeance on the only opponent to ever defeat him during his eight years as a pro, Nonito Donaire. But the Armenian-Australian dynamo is also tied to a promoter, Gary Shaw, who says he refuses to put together a contest with his former client Donaire because he deems him "disloyal" and likens him to a "dog." Shaw, given to animal kingdom analogies, has compared recent Darchinyan victim Jorge Arce to a chicken.

Welcome to the wacky world of the 115-pound "Raging Bull" out of Armenia by way of Australia and his less-than-conventional U.S. promoter, both of whom have raised trash-talk to a level not seen since Mike Tyson professed a longing to eat Lennox Lewis' children.

After Darchinyan thoroughly flummoxed and dismantled Mexican hero Arce in Anaheim, California, it looked for a while like the majority-Latin crowd would unanimously accept the defeat with equanimity and stumble from the Honda Center at least satisfied in the knowledge that they'd found a young, new Mexican hero when Antonio DeMarco beat awkward, hard-hitting Kid Diamond into submission.



Signs such as this only served to inflame passions between Darchinyan and Arce fans on hand at the Honda Center. After the main event was over, a nasty brawl erupted among the departing customers that had to be quelled by security and police.

Shutting Arce's mouth: Although his punishing left hand is Darchinyan's favorite punch, his southpaw jab is rapidly improving, along with his overall boxing skills.

Ethnic rivalries are nothing new to the fight game, but all the insults and vicious verbiage Darchinyan and his portly, disdainful promoter hurled at Arce for *years* raised the bitterness level and thus the potential for extracurricular violence at the scene. Both of them said repeatedly that they had nothing but respect for the Mexican people. But you can't go around claiming that the punches of a tough, beloved national hero out of Sinaloa are no harder than a girl's without giving offense. And, sure enough, just when the 5,450 fans seemed to be exiting with the same sweet decorum of an opera crowd, a nasty free-for-all erupted in an altitudinous section of the stands that took a flying squadron of cops several minutes to put down.

Approximately 120,000 Armenians live up the freeway from Anaheim in the Glendale-Burbank area. Some of them were sprinkled among the majority of Arce backers, and it seemed that each Armenian brought a national flag to flutter at the Showtime cameras and boil Mexican blood. It's not like a high school game where each team gets its own side of the stadium. It took five cops to subdue one of the brawlers. He was still trying to fight them as they carried him off like a carpet.

All in all, it was another fine night for Darchinyan, whose convincing victory propelled him into THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings at number 10.

The turnout was quite decent considering fans purchased their tickets as a punishing recession razed the land like a biblical plague and for a main event featuring two fighters whose combined weight couldn't equal either Klitschko. Promoters, who were a bit confused when cash cow Las Vegas caught the recession blues, had by this night figured out that though it's no longer so easy to lure fight fans across the desert to The Strip, you can adjust by bringing the fights to where fans live—in real cities bereft of fake Eiffel Towers, pyramids, or scheduled volcano eruptions.

The Los Angeles area has several TV channels that broadcast at least some of their shows in Armenian, and they helped stir a Raging Bull buzz. The extroverted Arce, 51-5-1 (39), needed no introduction to Latino fans. He's been a crossover star in Mexico ever since he appeared years ago on a reality TV show called *Big Brothers*. "I may not be the best boxer in Mexico," Arce said, "but I'm the most popular."

He'd also proved his machismo in a battery of grueling contests where he earned his reputation as a hard-charging brawler who presses the fight. His victims included Rosendo Alvarez and Hussein Hussein. But he lost the

Arce, who won only a single round on the official scorecards, took an increasingly worse beating as the bout progressed. By the 10th round, Darchinyan was virtually hitting his opponent at will with both hands. Although the Mexican slugger wanted to continue, he had already taken more punishment than necessary when the fight was stopped.

WBC title, highly prized in Mexico, to smooth Cristian Mijares in 2007 by unanimous decision.

At 33, Darchinyan is old for a small fighter and was considered exposed and washed-up by many experts after Donaire kayoed him in five in July '07. But in November '08, he won almost every minute of every round against the favored Mijares, outspeeding, outpunching, and out-strategizing him, and putting him down for good at the end of the ninth round.

Meanwhile, Shaw and the little Armenian-Australian with the big, big mouth had been showing up in front of various cameras and microphones calling out Arce and questioning his manhood. After dispatching Mijares, Darchinyan held three major alphabet titles. That sweetened the pot for Arce and his promoter, Bob Arum, and they accepted the challenge. But Darchinyan continued rolling out malodorous comments. He promised to punish, toy with, and ultimately kayo Arce. The stream of nasty invective was at least a little shocking in

view of the fact that two years earlier Darchinyan's heavy hands nearly killed feather-fisted Victor Burgos. After absorbing almost 12 rounds of big shots, Burgos was wheeled out of the ring on a gurney and underwent surgery to his damaged brain. He recovered well enough to return home to Tijuana for physical therapy, but never fought again.

Although Arce had promised his fans victory over Darchinyan, he also pointed out that he never surrenders, an odd boast, when you think about it. Why contemplate surrender at all? Floyd Patterson, who couldn't get past three minutes with Sonny Liston, showed a similar mindset when his preparations included securing a false beard and mustache to wear for his exit from the venue.

In some of his past contests, the supremely confident Darchinyan barely looked like a boxer as he stalked around the ring in a crustacean-like wrestler's crouch. But after tasting defeat from Donaire, he seemed to get Sweet Science religion and fought far more conventionally against Mijares. He was hugely effective mixing up his punches, countering accurately, and avoiding shots.

Against Arce, he combined elements of both styles—part crab, part boxing master. Sometimes he threw those goofy but effective uppercuts, sometimes he worked behind a jab. Arum said later it was evident to him that Arce had "no clue" how to fight a left-hander and that he should get himself a world-class trainer, namely Freddie Roach. Roach earned a sweet place in Arum's heart when he devised the strategy that Manny Pacquiao used to vanquish Oscar De La Hoya, whose deafening split with Arum years ago still echoes across the sport.

When Dr. Paul Wallace signaled that he'd seen enough after 11 rounds, referee Lou Moret stopped the contest with both fighters on their stools. A few minutes later, Arce complained bitterly to a Spanish-language journalist that Darchinyan had been getting away with murder in there, particularly with his elbows. But within half an hour, he calmed down and was gracious, congratulating an opponent who'd called him a coward for years.

As for rough tactics, fans in the cheapest of seats could easily see Arce charging in repeatedly with the top of his head. To his credit, Darchinyan showed no fear and fought his fight with minimal complaint.

Arce, bloody and bruised, never went down and objected to the stoppage, saying he's a puncher and should have been given his puncher's chance to snatch a victory. Darchinyan praised Arce for hanging in there as long as he did, but minutes later said his opponent had been "afraid" during the fight.

Darchinyan also said he plans to move up to bantam. Or maybe not. He said he wants flyweight Donaire, but when Shaw slipped into another anti-Donaire rap, Darchinyan said he and Shaw are a "team," implying maybe he doesn't want Donaire after all. What does he really want? That depends how many minutes ago you asked him.

If number-one ranked Darchinyan faces number two Fernando Montiel at 115 pounds, the victor would own the vacant RING junior bantamweight title, except Montiel is planning to move to bantam. Darchinyan again brought up the possibility of taking on RING junior feather champion Israel Vazquez, but added Vazquez may be moving to featherweight and that he didn't want to follow him up that far this quickly. Darchinyan and Vazquez have sparred together, and Vazquez, who was ringside, embraced Darchinyan after his victory. Unfortunately, Vazquez may never get medical clearance to fight again. He's had three detached retina eye surgeries.

All three judges scored the 11 completed rounds 10-1 in favor of Darchinyan. Judges Raul Caiz Jr. and Marty Denkin gave Arce the third round. Pat Russell gave him the fifth. THE RING also gave him only the fifth.

Darchinyan, who praises Australia as a place to live, says it's a crummy place to fight because boxing isn't popular there. So expect him to grace U.S. shores again later this year with his big mouth and his equally big left hand. ■

Ivan Goldman, THE RING's West Coast correspondent, was ringside at the Honda Center for Darchinyan-Arce.

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BOXING'S GREAT WEIGHT DEBATE

How Dangerous Are Day-Before-The-Fight Weigh-ins?

PHOTOS BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Although he lost his alphabet titles at the scales, Campbell fought hard to prevent Funeka from taking home the belts. He mounted a persistent body attack (opposite page), occasionally mixing in looping rights to the head (left). It was enough for Campbell to win a majority decision, but now he has to start all over again as a junior welterweight.

By Don Stradley

When Nate Campbell defeated Juan Diaz last year, he not only won three alphabet belts, he also put himself into position for a lucrative payday. He found himself thrust into a lightweight class loaded with marquee names. Wherever Campbell turned, he was looking at big money. But the demands of the human body will often supersede the demands of the bank account.

On February 14, the soon to be 37-year-old Campbell weighed in for what was to be a routine title defense against South Africa's Ali Funeka. The bout was the main event of an HBO *Boxing After Dark* show taking place at the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise, Florida. To his shock, Campbell was three pounds over the weight limit. He was allowed time to shed the extra weight, but two hours in a sauna melted off a mere six ounces.

In less time than it takes to place a call to Weight Watchers, Campbell was stripped of his title belts. Even if Campbell defeated Funeka, the belts would go into the alphabet scrap heap to be picked over by various promoters and fighters. But if Funeka won, the belts became Funeka's.

In an effort to save face, the de-belted Campbell fought hard for 12 rounds and defeated Funeka by a majority decision. Understandably, there was a catch in Campbell's throat when he talked later about his trouble making weight. "My body said, 'No more,'" Campbell said.

Ironically, Campbell's previous bout was canceled when his opponent, Joan Guzman, failed to make weight. Prior to that, when Guzman challenged WBO titlist Jorge Barrios, it was Barrios who blew it at the scales.

PHOTO BY RICK GUZMAN

A morose-looking Jose Luis Castillo failed to make weight for his scheduled third fight with Diego Corrales, which was canceled. Ironically, Corrales also lost the title on the scales when he defended against Joel Casamayor in October 2006.

These weighty issues are not only a promoter's biggest headache; they are also giving the medical community something to ponder.

"Part of the problem is that fighters should fight at the appropriate weight for their body size," Dr. Margaret Goodman told THE RING. "For some reason, once successful, boxers don't believe they need to maintain their weight."

The decade's poster boy for coming in heavy would have to be Jose Luis Castillo, who scandalized himself by twice failing to make weight for bouts with Diego Corrales. But Castillo is not the only guilty party. Corrales, in turn, didn't make weight for a bout with Joel Casamayor. Such titleholders as Stevie Forbes, Scott Harrison, and Chris John have all had bouts canceled, or been stripped of titles, by coming in overweight. But it's not just a matter of fighters eating their way out of their class. They sometimes *age* their way out.

It was during the mid-1980s that the Nevada State Athletic Commission, advised by Dr. Flip Homansky, began having fighters weigh in 24 hours before a fight. Previously, fighters weighed in the day of the fight, but Homansky was concerned about light-headed, dehydrated men competing mere hours after being weighed.

Homansky was hoping fighters and trainers would use the extra time to properly re-hydrate. What we're seeing on a regular basis, however, are aging fighters trying to "work" the system. They'll use the extra 24 hours to replenish after draining themselves to make a weight class they should've abandoned years ago.

Castillo was a perfect example. He was over 30 and had already fought as high as 150 pounds, but the opportunity

to fight Juan Lazcano for the 135-pound championship was too tempting. By the time Corrales came into Castillo's sights, Castillo should've already said goodbye to the lightweights. After the two Castillo-Corrales debacles, the Nevada commissioner supported the idea of fining boxers 10 percent of their purse if they failed to make weight on their first attempt. Still, Dr. Goodman feels commissions are ignoring an obvious, slowly growing dilemma.

"Every one of the commissions knows there is a problem, but it is easier to turn a blind eye and pray for nothing to happen that places the sport in a bad light. If there are no deaths, nothing changes.

"The weigh-in was changed for the right reasons to the day before, but the fighters have abused the system. As a result, many have permanently abused their bodies and metabolisms. Many have eating disorders from all the yo-yo dieting started in the amateurs, and they consider eating their reward, like [Ricky] Hatton," said Dr. Goodman.

Goodman's suggestion for change is complex.

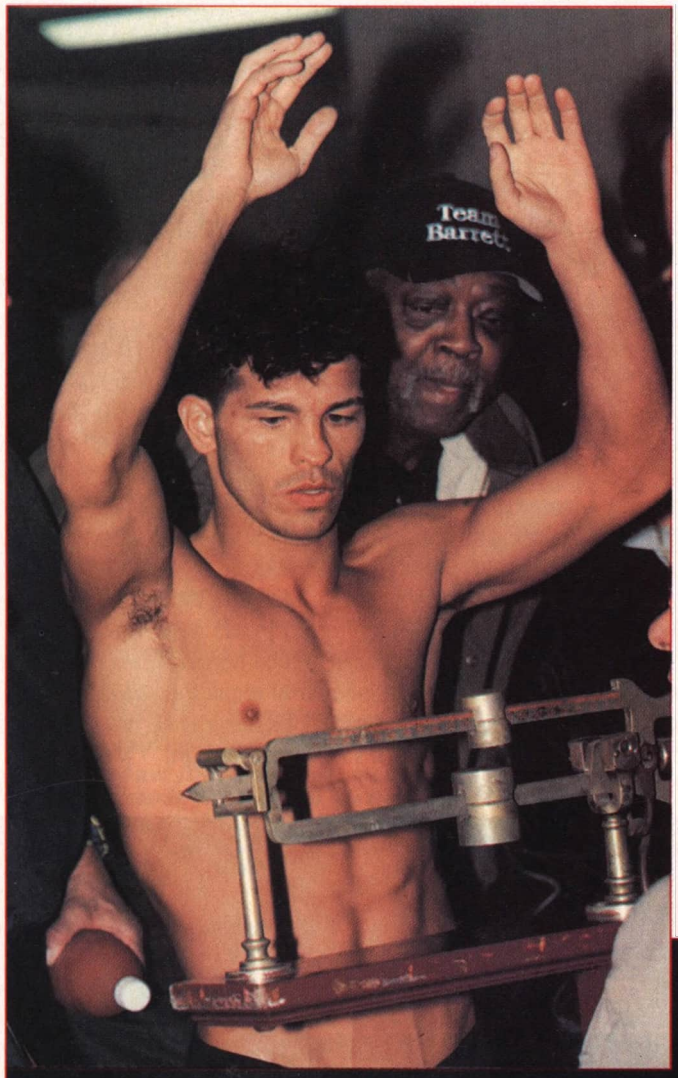
"There needs to be a pilot program started across the country where there are two weigh-ins. Use the day-before, but place restrictions on how much weight the fighter can gain the following day. Do this for six months and look at the data, the fight outcomes, injuries, etc. Then one could prove the effectiveness of the change."

Dr. Homansky's plan is more blunt. "If a fighter doesn't make weight, cancel the fight. Fine the fighter, manager, and promoter. Give the money to the opponent. That would stop the nonsense."

Dr. Homansky is less bothered by fighters lingering in divisions they've outgrown than by fighters who use the time between the weigh-in and the fight to take in enough fluids to actually jump an entire weight class. Arturo Gatti entered a 2000 fight with Joey Gamache having gained 19 pounds after the weigh-in. He knocked Gamache into retirement.

"Gamache seemed to be a beacon for why the day-before-fight weigh-ins proved to be a joke and potentially dangerous to an opponent," Dr. Goodman said. A similar case happened in 2005 when Miguel Cotto made the 140-pound limit for a contest with DeMarcus Corley, but entered the ring weighing 157.

Dr. Homansky told THE RING, "It was originally always less than 24 hours before, but now promoters have the weigh-in up to 34 hours earlier to help their fighter, or for TV. I did this to help them replenish fluids and electrolytes, but it is abused. The



Arturo Gatti weighed in at 140 pounds for his February 2000 fight with Joey Gamache (left), but had gained 17 pounds by the time he knocked out Gamache in the second round (below). The brutal knockout ended Gamache's career.

PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

fighters use it as a crutch. If the boxers fought in the right weight class for their body size, it wouldn't matter. The weigh-in could be anytime.

"Going back to the morning of the fight would be more uniform. It would decrease abuse. A welterweight should go into the ring weighing not much more than 147; it is a crime when a kid weighing almost 160 fights someone weighing 149.

"The key is educating the fighter and their team. The amateurs understand this. Amateur wrestling has gone back to weigh-ins just before the match, and serious injuries, including deaths, have decreased."

According to Dr. Goodman, commissions either ignore the problem or don't recognize it. "They typically take that tack, unless a spotlight from the press is shone on their actions," she said. "They think that fines are a deterrent, but they're not. Boxing hates changes. The promoters are worried because of the logistics of all this. Commissions aren't certain how to do same day weigh-ins, or if they should do two weigh-ins. The promoters like to have the big weigh-ins on TV, so that means showing up twice before fight time. The bottom line is, boxing regards change as bad—something placing further pressure on folks—so it is simpler to accept the status quo."

Keith Kizer, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission, agrees that there are holes in the system.

"It's actually become part of the matchmaking process," said Kizer, "with some people not wanting to fight a certain fighter because he's known to put on extra weight after the weigh-in. Or sometimes they'll agree to a fight because they know the opponent will come in depleted. I don't see it necessarily as fighters 'abusing' the system. I think 'abuse' is too strong a word."

Kizer is open to changes, but hasn't heard any ideas that appeal to him. As for dictating how much weight a fighter can put on after a weigh-in, "I'm apprehensive about telling fighters that it's wrong to re-hydrate too much. We want them to re-hydrate and be healthy. I haven't seen statistics that show the heavier fighter always wins. I know that's being studied, but it's inconclusive right now," Kizer said.

Kizer also opposes the idea of two weigh-ins.

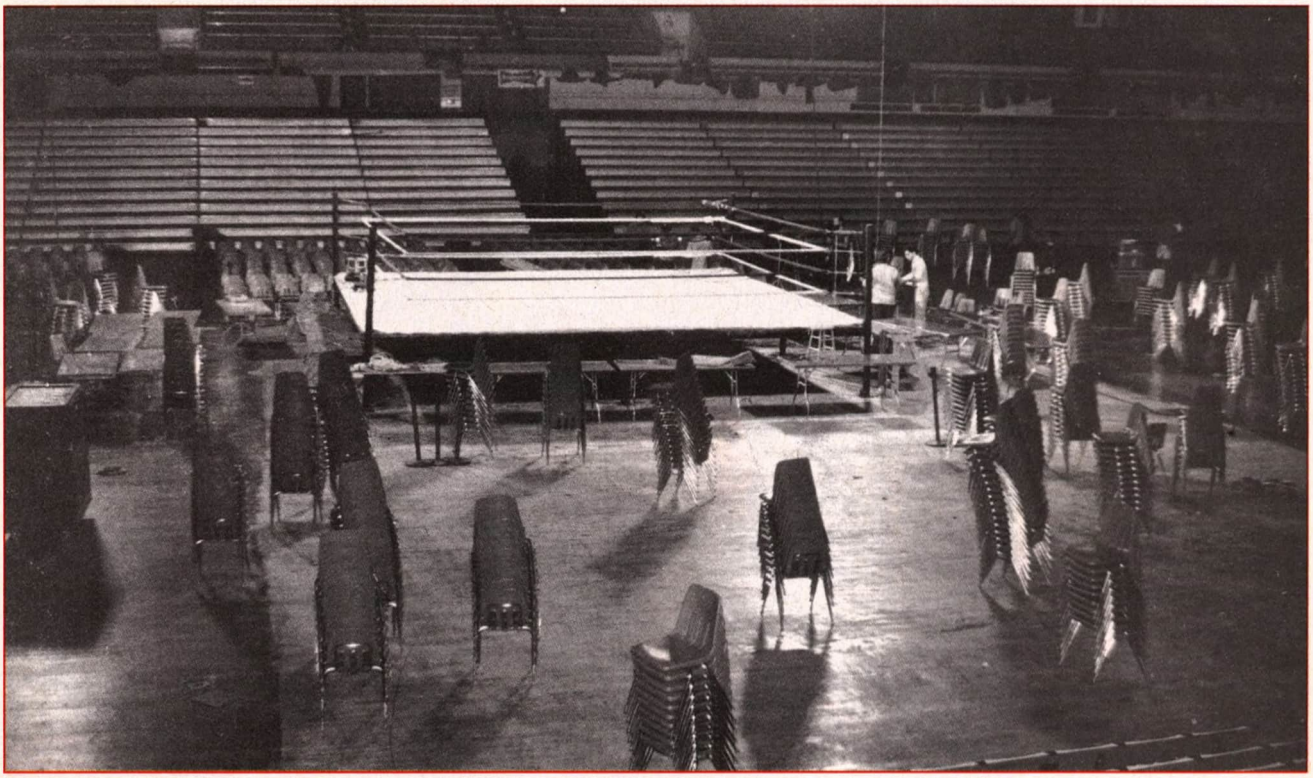
"I've spoken to fighters who say they can't sleep before the first weigh-in. To have a second weigh-in means you'll have fighters operating on no sleep for two or three days. That's not good."

Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, who was the WBA light heavyweight titleholder from 1980 to 1981, wishes the day-before weigh-in were in place when he fought.

"If they'd had it when I was fighting, I'd still be a champion today," he said.

Now the trainer of Chad Dawson, Mustafa Muhammad told THE RING, "I like giving a fighter a chance to re-hydrate. The fighters who can't make weight don't have the right people around them. Fighters need to be watched. When a guy has that much trouble, 80 percent of the time it's because his body is saying the game is over."

Mustafa Muhammad was involved in a scale controversy when he failed to make weight for a 1983 bout with Michael Spinks. It was a highly anticipated rematch—Spinks had beaten Muhammad for the title months earlier. To everyone's surprise, Mustafa Muham-



This is what the DC Armory looked like on the night of July 15, 1983. Instead of a light heavyweight title fight between Michael Spinks and Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, there was an empty ring and a deserted arena. The fight was cancelled when Mustafa Muhammad failed to make weight.

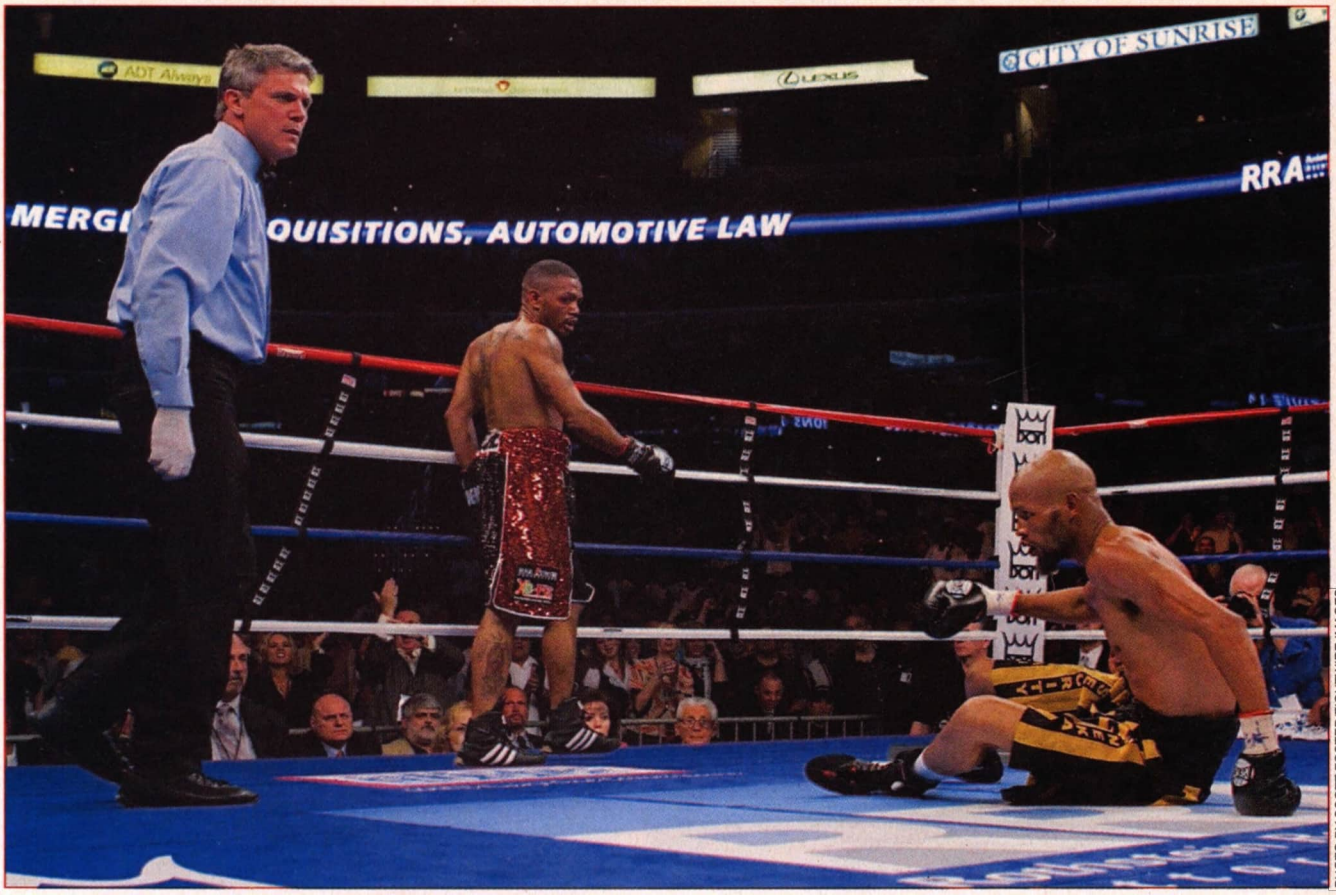


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The knockdowns Campbell scored in the second and 11th rounds were critical to his majority decision victory, as there was a total of only six points dividing he and Funeka on the three official scorecards. "My body said, 'No more,'" said Campbell, who will now campaign at 140.

mad weighed in heavy. To this day he claims the scale was off.

"I weighed myself the night before and I was 174," he said. "Everything was on schedule. But that scale was way over. Bert Randolph Sugar came to my defense and weighed a three-pound bag of flour, and the scale jumped five pounds. Spinks always weighed light, but that day he weighed right at the limit. You knew something was wrong."

Mustafa Muhammad-Spinks II was canceled, but Campbell-Funeka had to go on. The promotion, a mega show dubbed "The St. Valentine Day Massacre," had been troubled for days and had already seen the roster jiggled.

Campbell, 33-5-1 (25), was angry and disappointed at his failure to make weight. Still, he turned his disappointment into fuel for battle. From the opening bell Campbell planted his forehead on Funeka's chest and hammered away with bodyblows, occasionally lobbing overhand rights to the head. One of those right hands nearly ended the fight in round two when Campbell sent Funeka toppling backward to the canvas.

By the middle rounds, Campbell was huffing and puffing like the middle-aged fighter he is, but in the 11th he dropped Funeka a second time. The 12th was all Campbell's, as he blasted away at Funeka's midsection. He'd be damned if his three belts ended up draped around Funeka's lanky body.

Judge Deon Dwarte scored the bout 113-113, but Michael Pernick and Benoit Roussel saw it for Campbell, 115-111 and 114-112, respectively. Funeka, 30-2 (25), was visibly upset by the scoring, but the verdict was fair.

The verdict on weighing fighters, though, needs a little more scrutiny.

"I wish I had the answer," Kizer said. "It's a tough one. At the end of the day, it's about money. If a fighter is offered a million dollars to compete in a weight class that doesn't suit him, he'll try it. Wouldn't you?"

Perhaps, but the inherent greed associated with the sport shouldn't give commissions an excuse to not give their full attention to the matter. Why wait for another Gatti-Gamache to happen? Why wait for more Castillo-style embarrassments?

Oscar De La Hoya probably thought he could use the time to re-hydrate after wasting himself to make weight for his fight with Manny Pacquiao. His re-hydration process amounted to a mere two pounds between the weigh-in and the fight, and he could not snap his tired body to life. But time will pass, and another fighter will try to succeed where Oscar failed. The next fighter may not be lucky enough to quit on his stool. Day-before weigh-ins were established with good intentions, but the system needs an overhaul, if only because it makes fighters think they can do more than is physically possible. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

THE ART OF THE CHEAT

BOXING'S LONG AND SORDID TRADITION

The most persistent and famous allegation of a boxer wearing "loaded" gloves came after Jack Dempsey brutalized Jess Willard in their 1919 bout for the heavyweight championship, which Dempsey won via third-round TKO. The man in the white cap seen entering the ring on the far left is Doc Kearns, Dempsey's manager and the person who supposedly covered Dempsey's handwraps with plaster of paris.

By Don Stradley

When Jess Willard was an elderly man, he used to invite reporters to touch his face. "Feel this," he'd say, using one of his giant hands to guide the reporter's fingers. Willard wanted them to feel the reminder of a bout that happened 40 years earlier in Toledo, Ohio. Reporters never knew how to respond. A section of Willard's cheekbone still moved around under the skin like a loose coin.

"This is what Dempsey did," Willard would say. "Do you think a little guy could do that without something in his gloves?"

***

Boxing's reputation as the red light district of sports is grossly disproportionate to the actual number of fighters who get called out, but the recent controversy

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Emanuel Steward, pictured wrapping Wladimir Klitschko's hands for a training session, says he thinks there is a cultural difference between U.S. trainers and those from Latin America, which results in Latin-American trainers using more gauze and tape to protect their fighters' hands.

surrounding Antonio Margarito's handwraps has brought the topic of cheating into the light again. Mind you, we're not talking about "dirty" fighters, for the dirtiest of them do their work in full view of the customers. Cheaters gain their edge when no one is looking.

There's no doubt Margarito's situation will follow him into the future, probably beyond the length of his suspension. Shane Mosley, who is under scrutiny himself as the ongoing BALCO investigation lurches into its fifth year, could tell Margarito how these things tend to linger over a fighter, for even though we live in a country where people are innocent until proven guilty, there's another bromide that carries even more clout: perception is everything.

The perception is that something fishy is going on with handwraps.

Mere weeks before Margarito's camp was busted for allegedly using a hardening substance on his hands prior to his bout with Shane Mosley, Oscar De La Hoya's handwraps were questioned before his December bout with Manny Pacquiao. In 2001, Felix Trinidad's team was reproached for the way Trinidad's hands were taped prior to his bout with Bernard Hopkins. Trinidad's father exclaimed, "This is how we wrap hands in Puerto Rico."

A cultural divide seems to exist when it comes to wrapping a fighter's hands. The wrapped hands of many Mexican and Puerto Rican fighters look as dangerous as the battle cestus worn by the ancient Greeks. Is this a subtle form of cheating?

"I don't think so," said HBO analyst and Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward, who described the style of wrapping south of the United States as "ritualistic."

"Up here, we wrap quickly," Steward told THE RING. "Trainers in Latin American countries use much more material, and spend twice as long on a fighter. You've noticed American fighters are always breaking their hands, but you don't see as many hand problems among Latin-American fighters. With Margarito, I think his trainer was just trying to protect his fighter's hands."

Objecting to what a fighter may have in or on his hands is as old as the Sweet Science itself. During an 1810 bout at Copthall Common near East Grinstead, England, the handlers of British hero Tom Cribb complained that the American Tom Molineaux had a lead ball bearing in his fist. This turned out to be a ruse to give Cribb a breather. While the referee searched Molineaux, Cribb regrouped; he went on to win the fight.

The cornermen of the bare-fist era were diabolical. During an 1872 bout between Arthur Chambers and William Edwards, Chambers' own second bit him on the shoulder. The second then showed the bite marks to the referee, accusing Edwards of doing the biting. The referee promptly disqualified Edwards. *The New York Times* covered this bout with a headline declaring "The Downfall Of Pugilism," but the cheating would continue through all of boxing's eras, from the days when Johnny Regan, an American middleweight of the 1880s, sharpened the spikes on his fighting boots so he could cut into an opponent's legs, to when an astringent mysteriously appeared on Sonny Liston's gloves in his 1964 bout with Muhammad Ali.

The sporting world has never had

much of a conscience. Hockey has its illegal sticks; auto racing has nimble-fingered mechanics making adjustments that go undetected by engine monitors; baseball has corked bats, pine tar, and spitballs; horse racing has battery-operated buzzers. Comedian Bill Maher recently referred to the Olympic Games as a contest to determine which country had the best drugs. His audience nodded and laughed. Our society's sense of competition has morphed from "may the best man win" to "win at all costs." It's a world of cheaters.

"Margaritogate" has created a stir, but boxing fans, fed constant stories about performance enhancers and other dishonest dealings, aren't too surprised. They're probably surprised they don't hear about illegal handwraps more often.

"People assume that cheating goes on in boxing all the time, but I would say it's very seldom," said Steward. "I doubt Margarito has done this in the past; he's fought in all of the biggest states with the best commissions, so I find it hard to believe he'd get away with it for this long.

"It's very easy to make a hand into a solid cast. I've done it for fighters in sparring, just to make sure their knuckles and wrists are stabilized. But no one would dare do it in a real fight because they would risk losing their license, and discredit their entire career," said Steward.

Tim Lueckenhoff, president of the Association of Boxing Commissions, concurred, telling THE RING that hand-wrapping controversies are "very rare."

For as long as fighters have worn gloves, they've tampered with the contents. Lew Jenkins was a master at shifting the padding around in his gloves. Fritzie Zivic once recalled, "He'd push the pads back so when you got hit with his punch, all he had was a little bit of leather in between there." Describing how it felt to get hit in the forehead by Jenkins, Zivic said, "I thought the building fell on me." At least Zivic lived to laugh about it.

Billy Collins Jr. was an undefeated prospect when he faced Luis Resto in Madison Square Garden back in 1983. After 10 rounds, Resto had slugged Collins into blind uselessness. After the fight, Collins' father grabbed Resto's gloved hand and felt nothing but knuckles. Someone had removed the horsehair lining from Resto's gloves.

Collins' eyes were permanently damaged. He would never fight again. Nine months later, drunk and depressed, he drove into a creek and died on impact. Veteran trainer Lee Black testified in court that he had witnessed Resto's trainer, Carlos "Panama" Lewis, take the gloves into a bathroom and slit them with a scissors. Resto and Lewis served 2½ years in prison for, among other things, tampering with a sporting contest.

"I know any time that a horsehair glove is used, I certainly take note," said Lueckenhoff, who explained the proper procedure for THE RING: "The gloves are supposed to be placed on the fighters in

This is what Billy Collins, pictured with his father, Billy Sr., looked like the morning after his infamous fight with Luis Resto. Resto and his trainer, Panama Lewis, both did jail time for removing the padding from the fighter's gloves and received a lifetime ban from boxing.

Dempsey and Kearns look at a photo of the Willard fight in 1950 (above). Fourteen years later, when Kearns was broke and dying, he wrote a story admitting he'd loaded Dempsey's gloves and explained how he did it. However, when the Milwaukee Journal *tried to recreate the method (below), it did not work.*

the presence of the inspector. Then the tape over the gloves are to be marked by the inspector to easily determine if they have been altered. In cases when an inspector has not viewed the wraps and the gloves have been applied, it is imperative that the gloves be removed and the handwraps inspected.

"Normally, handwraps are not inspected or retained after a fight."

The holy grail of discarded handwraps would be ones worn by Dempsey on July 4, 1919. That was the day he nearly slaughtered Willard for the heavyweight championship, caving in the side of Willard's face and breaking his jaw in multiple places.

In a posthumous memoir published in a January 1964 issue of *Sports Illustrated*, Dempsey's manager, Jack "Doc" Kearns, claimed to have covered Dempsey's wrapped hands with plaster of paris. Kearns was trying to ensure Dempsey would win by first-round knockout because of a $100,000 wager he'd placed. According to Kearns, Dempsey thought his hands were being sprinkled with talcum powder.

Dempsey, who had suffered these rumors in the past, was livid when the piece came out. He claimed Kearns was just a bitter old man telling lies. Dempsey often claimed the loaded glove theory was started by Willard, although he admitted to author Peter Heller that "in those days you could put all the tape on your hands that you wanted to."

Tales of fighters plastering their hands or carrying flat-head bolts in their gloves were not unusual prior to the 1930s. Jim Jeffries, who defeated Bob Fitzsimmons twice, sincerely believed that "Ruby Robert" had something extra in his gloves. An unnamed member of Fitzsimmons' camp went to the press years later and kept the ugly rumor going.

In 1925, Walk Miller, the manager of Tiger Flowers, accused Jack Delaney of loading his gloves when he knocked Flowers out in their New York bout. After an investigation, the commission found in favor of Delaney and suspended Miller for wasting their time. When Delaney kayoed Flowers in a rematch, Delaney's manager, Pete Reilly, made

a point of cutting open Delaney's gloves in front of the audience to prove his fighter's hands weren't gimmicked.

Weeks after the publication of Kearns' somewhat illogical story, *Milwaukee Journal* boxing writer Evans Kirby performed an experiment following Kearns' exact description. All that resulted was a thin layer that cracked at the slightest touch.

Still, Kearns' memoir contained some persuasive points.

"In all his subsequent career, Dempsey never inflicted such dreadful damage on an opponent. And he did it to this one in the very first round," Kearns wrote.

"In those times you got away with everything possible. Turn your head, or let the other guy turn his, and knuckles were wrapped in heavy black bicycle tape or the thick lead foil in which bulk tea was packaged. The net result was much like hitting a man with a leather-padded mallet. The rules were lax then, officials were not at all fussy, and there were few boxing commissions."

The tape used during those days, referred to as "insulation tape" or "tire tape," was eventually prohibited and replaced by medical tape and gauze. But if Dempsey beat Willard with loaded gloves, he wasn't alone. Ed "Gunboat" Smith did it too. Smith beat Willard by 20-round decision in 1913.

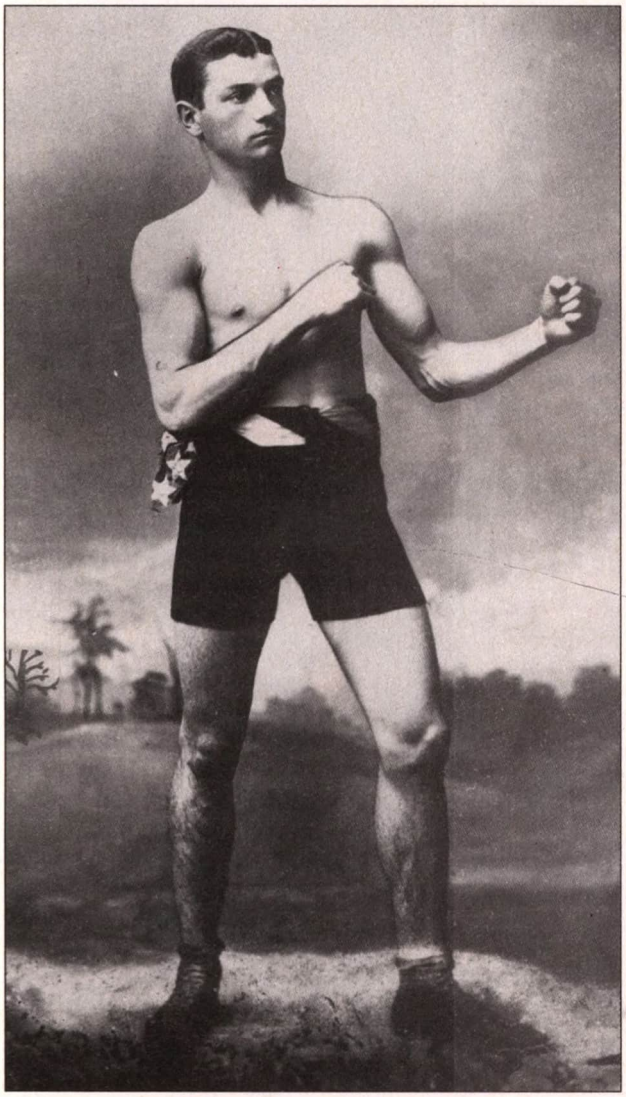
"Tore his ear right off," Smith said in a 1970 interview. "The blood was running down, and oh, God. I, of course, had my gloves loaded. I had insulation tape laid across my hands." Smith claimed such tape was common, and that Willard probably wore some too. "In those days you could do it."

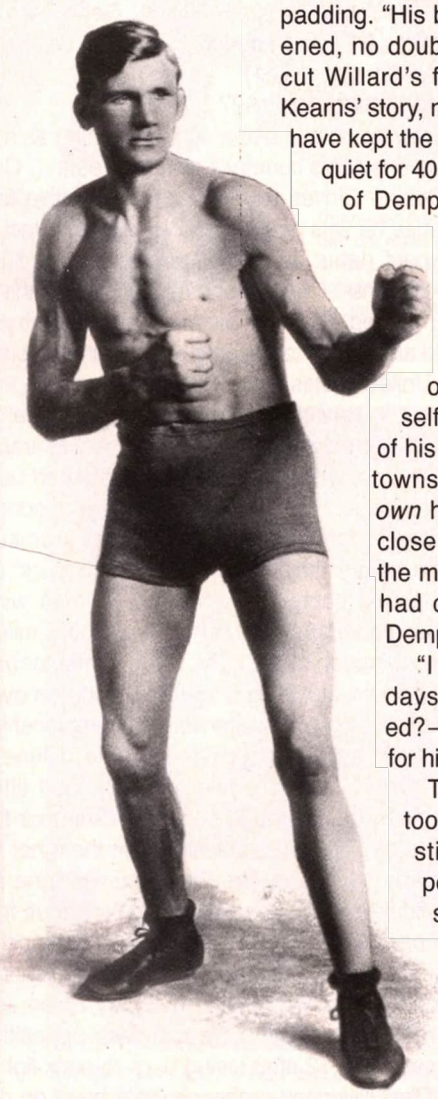
Long forgotten in the Dempsey saga is the link between Dempsey and one of the game's cruelest fighters, Kid McCoy. In 1920, Dempsey's trainer, Jimmy DeForest, told Joe Vila of *The New York Evening Sun*, "When I handled Kid McCoy, I used to bandage his hands with a certain kind of adhesive tape. When McCoy slipped on the gloves, the tape hardened, and as a result he was able to inflict unusual punishment. I wound Dempsey's hands with the same kind of bandages, which Willard inspected." DeForest rebuffed the accusations that Dempsey used some kind of "aluminum" padding. "His bandages became hardened, no doubt, and that was why he cut Willard's face to ribbons." As for Kearns' story, no one believed he would have kept the lore of the loaded gloves quiet for 40 years. Teddy Hayes, one of Dempsey's seconds, said of Kearns, "He was dying and he was broke. He would have said anything for money."

Also, Kearns had once been a fighter himself. He used to spin yarns of his days in boxing's frontier towns, when he covered his *own* hands in plaster. Those close to Kearns wondered if the mental misfires of old age had caused him to confuse Dempsey's life with his own.

"I was a product of the days—have they ever ended?—when it was every man for himself," Kearns wrote.

Things haven't changed too much, Doc. Winning is still all that matters. And portions of the public still say nothing is a crime until you get caught. ■





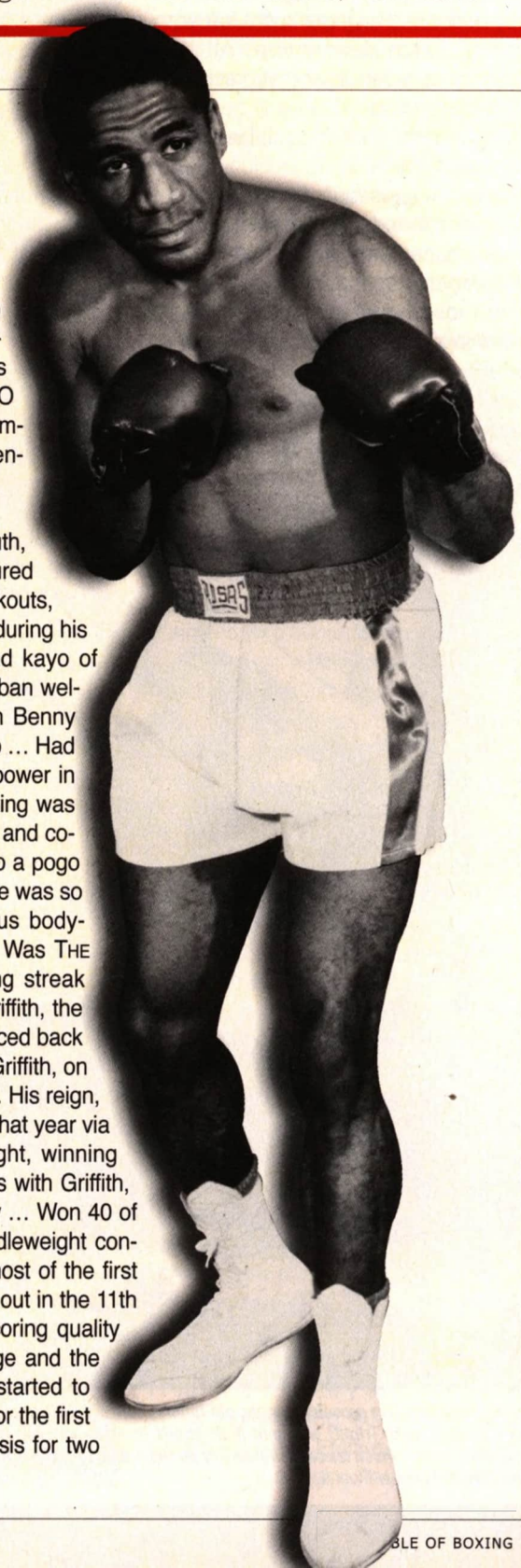
Cheating was far more prevalent among old-timers. Both Kid McCoy (above) and Gunboat Smith (right) wrapped their hands in what was known as "insulation tape," which made their punches far more damaging than would have been the case without it.

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

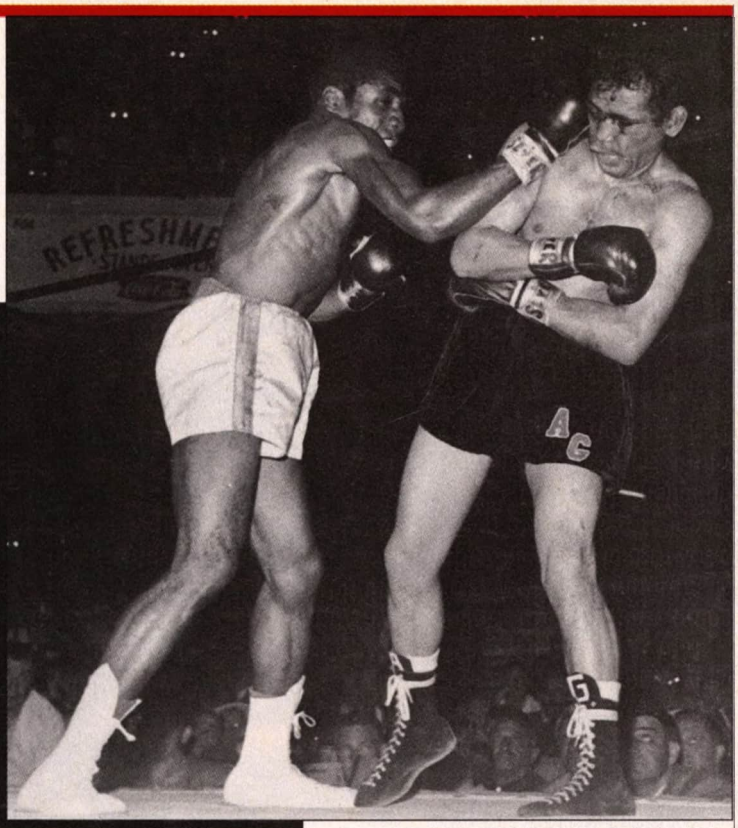
[Hall of Fame Profile]

THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

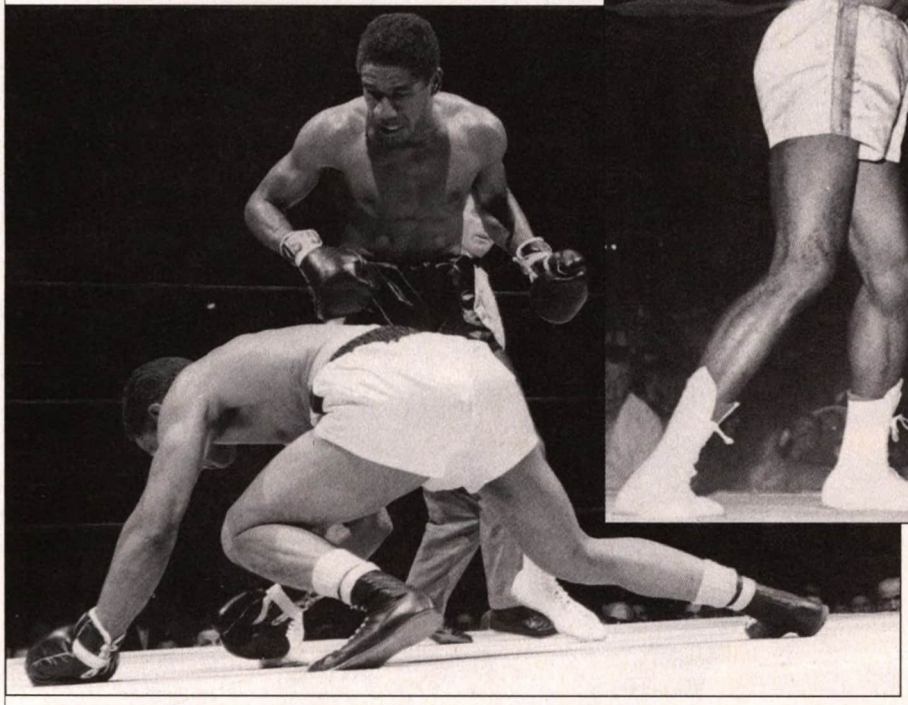
Luis Rodriguez



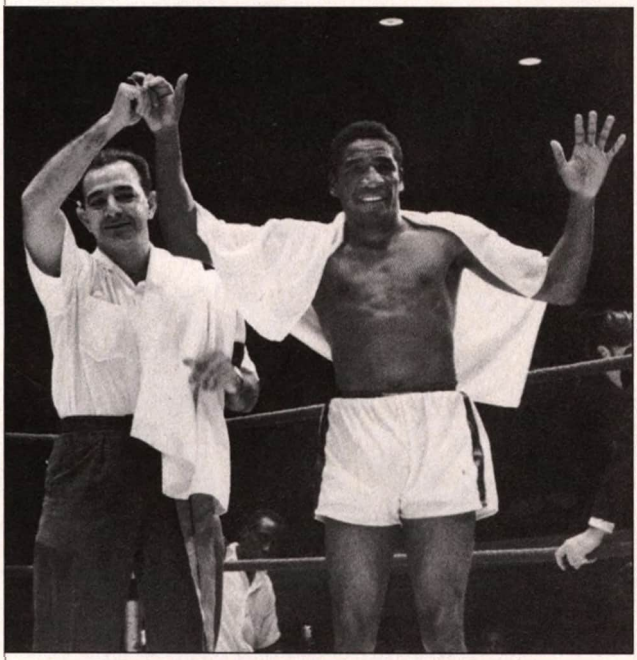
Birthdate: June 17, 1937
Birthplace: Camaguey, Cuba
Date of Death: July 8, 1996
Nickname: El Feo (The Ugly One)
Weight Class: Welterweight, Middleweight
Professional Record: 107-13 (49) with 1 no-contest
Title Held: World Welterweight (March 21, 1963-June 8, 1963)
Best Performances: Emile Griffith (W 15), Ruben "Hurricane" Carter (W 10, W 10), Benny "Kid" Paret (W 10, W 10), Curtis Cokes (W 10), Bennie Briscoe (W 10, W 10), George Benton (KO 9), Jesse Smith (W 10), Yama Bahama (KO 3), Gene "Ace" Armstrong (KO 8), Holly Mims (W 10), Federico Thompson (W 10), Denny Moyer (KO 9), Tony Mundine (KO 1)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1997
Background: Grew up poor in Cuba, took up boxing as a youth, and went on to become one of his country's all-time greats ... Captured the Cuban national Golden Gloves title with 10 consecutive knockouts, which was ironic because he was never considered a big puncher during his pro career ... Made paid debut June 2, 1956, with a third-round kayo of Lazaro Hernandez in Havana ... By the end of '58, he was the Cuban welterweight champ and owned a pair of victories over countryman Benny "Kid" Paret, who would also go on to become a world championship ... Had already fought in the United States when Fidel Castro came into power in '59, and had a final bout in Havana in '60 before professional boxing was banned in his homeland ... Settled in Miami, where he was trained and co-managed by Angelo Dundee, who said, "I always compared Luis to a pogo stick: bounce, bounce, bounce. Here, there, in front of you, gone. He was so smooth that he could bang on the inside—he was a tremendous body-puncher—and be gone before the other guy could fire back" ... Was THE RING's top-rated 147-pound contender when his 35-bout winning streak came to an end, on December 17, 1960, at the hands of Emile Griffith, the man who would become his arch-rival ... The Cuban defector bounced back to win 16 of his next 17 bouts, including a 15-round decision over Griffith, on March 21, 1963, to capture the world welterweight championship ... His reign, however, was shorted-lived, as Griffith regained the title in June of that year via 15-round decision ... Griffith also prevailed in their third title fight, winning another decision in June '64 ... Although he went 1-3 in four fights with Griffith, all were extremely close and could have easily gone the other way ... Won 40 of his next 43 bouts, and by 1967 was THE RING's number-one middleweight contender ... Outboxed middleweight champion Nino Benvenuti for most of the first 10 rounds of a November '69 title bid in Rome, only to be knocked out in the 11th ... Continued to compete at a high level the next three years, scoring quality wins over Bobby Cassidy, Tony Mundine, and Davey Hilton ... Age and the wear-and-tear of so many bouts against world-class opposition started to take their toll, and he retired in '72 after losing back-to-back fights for the first time in his career ... Died of kidney problems (he'd been on dialysis for two years) at the relative young age of 59.



Gene "Ace" Armstrong touches down after fielding a right hand from Rodriguez in the fourth round of their June 1962 bout at Madison Square Garden. Referee Barney Felix stopped the fight in the eighth round and awarded Rodriguez a TKO victory.

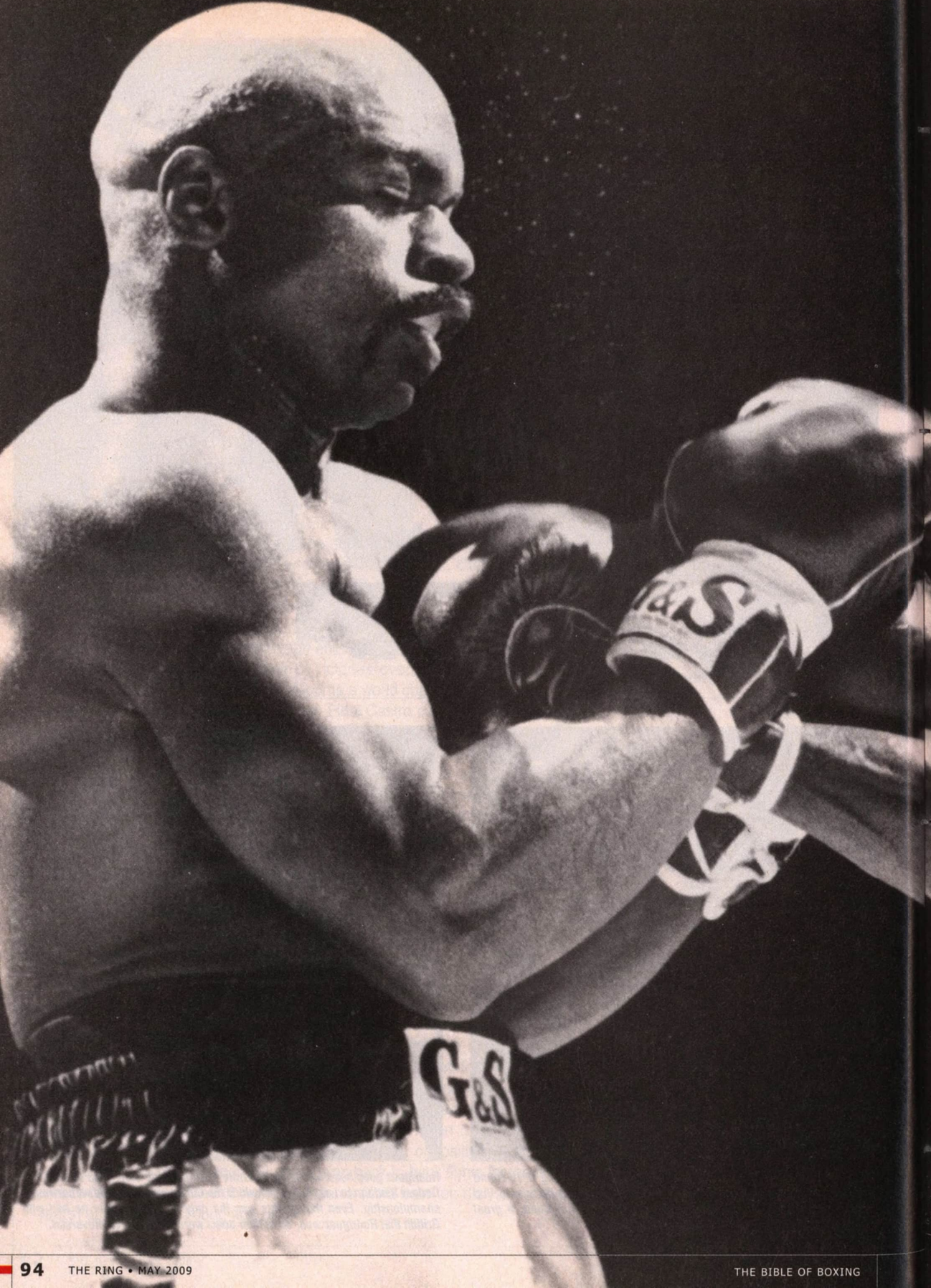


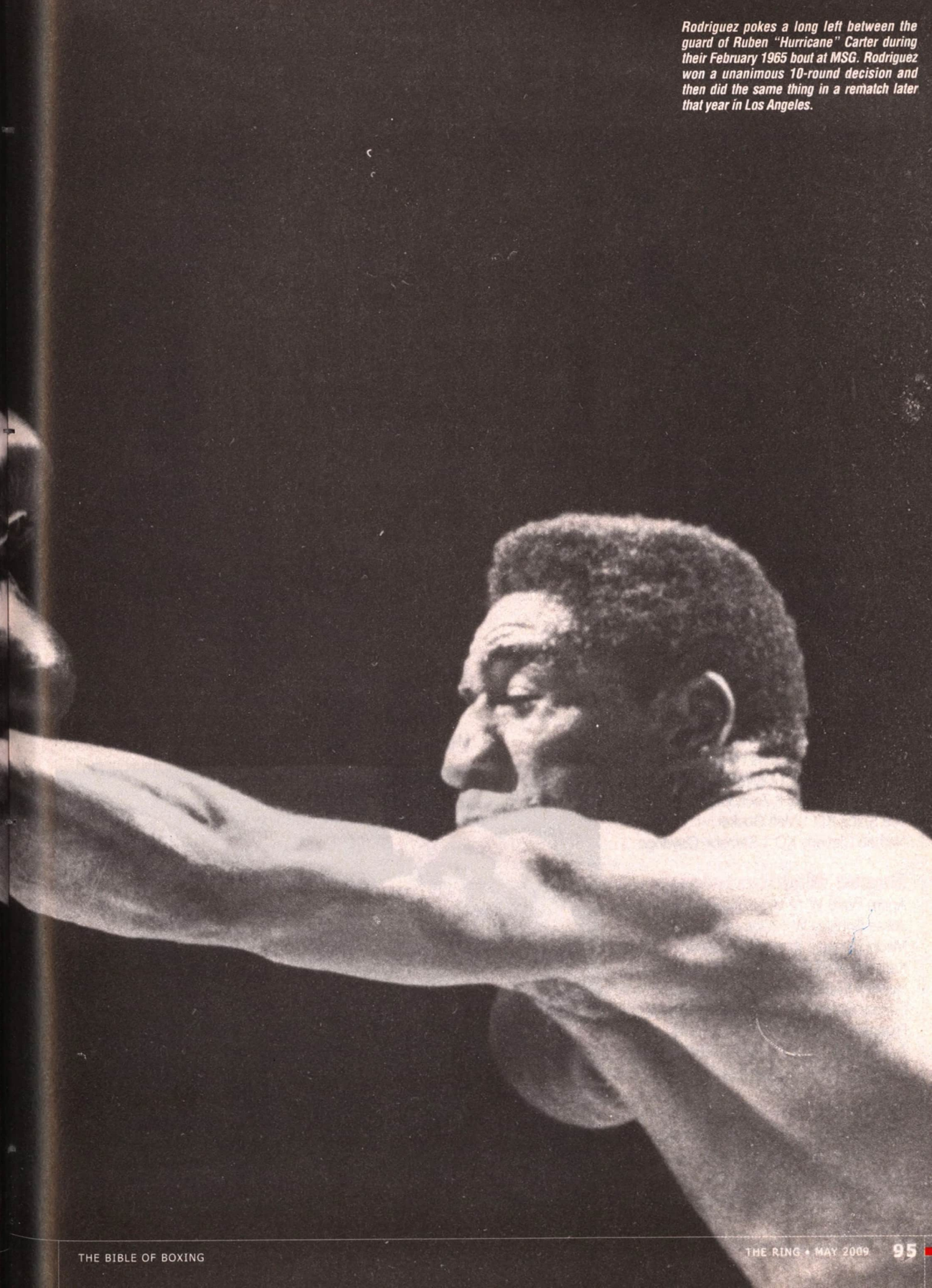
Rodriguez pounds a bloody Alvaro Gutierrez into the ropes en route to a fourth-round TKO victory. The fight, which took place at the legendary Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles on July 7,1960, helped the Cuban climb to the top of the welterweight ratings.



A young Angelo Dundee raises Rodriguez' arm following a 10-round decision over Joey Giambra in Miami Beach. Dundee once said that Rodriguez was "the finest thing that ever came out of Cuba, a great man, and a classy fighter."

Rodriguez goes head-to-head with Emile Griffith during their 1963 title fight at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles in which the Cuban won the world welterweight championship. Even though this was the only fight of the four he had with Griffith that Rodriguez won, all of their bouts were close and controversial.





Rodriguez pokes a long left between the guard of Ruben "Hurricane" Carter during their February 1965 bout at MSG. Rodriguez won a unanimous 10-round decision and then did the same thing in a rematch later that year in Los Angeles.

[Summary]

Heavyweights

Ruslan Chagaev Tech. Win 6 Carl Drumond
Martin Rogan KO 11 Matt Skelton
Justin Whitehead W 10 Kim Heta
Thamsanga Dube KO 11 Smart Nkomo
B.J. Flores KO 3 Matt Hicks
Ray Austin W 8 Julius Long
Bermane Stiverne W 8 Robert Hawkins
Tor Hamer KO 1 Clarence Tillman
Francois Botha W 12 Ron Guerrero
Tommy Morrison KO 1 Corey Williams

Cruiserweights

Tomasz Adamek KO 8 Johnathon Banks
(*Retains World/IBF Titles*)
Aleksander Kotlobay KO 2 Jozsef Nagy
Marco Huck KO 3 Geoffrey Battelo
Shaun George KO 1 Jaffa Ballogou
Troy Ross KO 4 Ehinomen Ehikhamenor
Rico Hoye W 8 Akinyemi Laleye
Alfredo Escalera Jr. KO 6 Erick Vega
Felix Cora Jr. KO 3 Tim Flamos
Ryan Coyne W 5 Tim Flamos
Arthur Williams W 10 Dewey Cooper
Mateusz Masternak KO 4 Laszlo Hubert

Light Heavyweights

Glen Johnson W 10 Daniel Judah
Yusaf Mack W 12 Chris Henry
Clinton Woods W 12 Elvir Muriqi
Byron Mitchell KO 6 Zach Walters
Joe Spina KO 1 Matt Gockel
Nathan Cleverly KO 1 Samson Onyango

Super Middleweights

Andre Ward W 12 Henry Buchanan
Jesse Brinkley W 12 Joey Gilbert
Medhi Bouadla W 10 Mehdi Amar
Karo Murat KO 10 Cristian Sanavia
Howard Eastman W 10 Leon Gilkes
Eduard Gutknecht KO 5 Rubin Williams
Rigoberto Alvarez KO 5 Jose Corral
Aaron Pryor Jr. KO 2 William Prieto
Anthony Dirrell W 4 Jose Medina

Middleweights

Kelly Pavlik KO 9 Marco Antonio Rubio
(*Retains World/WBC Titles*)
John Duddy W 10 Matt Vanda
Anthony Mundine W 12 Shannan Taylor
Sebastian Sylvester KO 7 Gaetano Nespro
Giovanni Lorenzo KO 2 Dionisio Miranda
Francis Cheka W 12 Rashid Matumla
Darren McDermott W 10 Steven Bendall
Gennady Martirosyan KO 9 Kiatchai Singwancha
Nilson Tapia KO 6 Juan Novoa
Fernando Guerrero W 8 Gabriel Rosado
Claudio Abalos W 10 Francisco Mora

Junior Middleweights

Sergio Martinez D 12 Kermit Cintron
Alfredo Angulo KO 5 Cosme Rivera
Robert Medley W 12 Tui Leveni
Vincent Vuma W 12 Hamlet Petrosyan
Alexander Abraham W 12 Nikola Stevanovic
Timur Nergadze W 12 Tursunbay Ablyakimov
Carlos Molina W 10 Alexis Camacho
Jesus Karass W 10 Carson Jones
Marcelo Rodriguez KO 2 Silvio De Mello
Masahiro Mizumoto KO 2 Satoshi Fukumori
Milton Nunez KO 3 Diego Castillo
Ulises Lopez KO 2 Sergio Sanders
Vanes Martirosyan W 8 Billy Lyell

Welterweights

Shane Mosley KO 9 Antonio Margarito
(*Wins WBA Title*)
Miguel Cotto KO 5 Michael Jennings

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Junior middleweight Vanes Martirosyan jabs his way to a decision over Billy Lyell

Antonin Decarie W 12 Dorin Spivey
Daisuke Nakagawa W 10 Koji Numata
Ricardo Williams W 8 Doel Carrasquillo
Oliver Guettel KO 9 Daniel Zell
Ray Robinson KO 3 Darnel Jiles
Kell Brook KO 2 Stuart Elwell
Holly Holm W 10 Myriam Lamare

Junior Welterweights

Juan Urango W 12 Herman Ngoudjo
(*Wins Vacant IBF Title*)
Andreas Kotelnik W 12 Marcos Maidana
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Nate Campbell W 12 Ali Funeka
Yodsanan Sor Nanthachai KO 3 Jonathan Simamora
Marco Antonio Barrera W Disq. 3 Freudis Rojas
Phillip N'dou KO 5 Rachid Drilzane
Ajose Olusegun KO 7 Scott Haywood
Ivan Valle KO 3 Carlos Urias

Lightweights

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Juan Diaz
(*Retains World Title; Wins Vacant WBA Title*)
Michael Katsidis W 10 Angel Ramirez
Breidis Prescott W Disq. 10 Humberto Toledo
Antonio DeMarco KO 9 Almazbek Raiymkulov
Anthony Mezaache W 12 Jonathan Thaxton
Jose Alfaro KO 8 Carlos Velasquez
Daniel Estrada KO 8 Joel Ortega
Rene Gonzalez KO 7 Saul Carreon
Patrick Malinga KO 4 Romeo Jako
Hylon Williams Jr. KO 6 Edgar Portillo

Junior Lightweights

Robert Guerrero KO 1 Edel Ruiz
Hugo Cazares KO 3 Jorge Romero
Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 1 Walter Estrada
Alejandro Sanabria KO 2 Guadalupe Arce
Rafael Guzman W 12 Isaac Bejarano
Kazumasa Kihara W 10 Zaiki Takemoto
David Gomez KO 7 Leonardo Resendiz
Kina Malpartida KO 10 Maureen Shea

Featherweights

Cristobal Cruz W 12 Cyril Thomas
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Chris John D 12 Rocky Juarez
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Jorge Solis KO 5 Monty Meza Clay
Juan Burgos KO 2 Fernando Lizarraga
Naoki Matsuda D 10 Koji Umetsu
Eduardo Escobedo KO 10 Daniel Escobedo
Francisco Garcia D 10 Victoriano Nunez
Jonathan Barros KO 5 Cristian Palma
Ricardo Castillo KO 10 Abraham Rodriguez
Eric Canoy W 10 Elmer Legaria

Junior Featherweights

Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 4 Carlos Lopez
Rendall Munroe W 12 Kiko Martinez
Jose Cabrera W 10 Oswaldo Rodriguez
Marangin Marbun W 10 La Amir Laila
Nobuto Ikehara W 10 Kaona Klongpajol
Daniel Sassou W 10 Zsolt Nagy
Miguel Beltran Jr. KO 4 Victoriano Nunez
Shoji Kimura KO 2 Kazuma Miura

Bantamweights

Gerry Penalosa W 10 German Meraz
Mahyar Monshipour KO 8 Sean Hughe
Mohamed Bouleghcha W 12 Emiliano Salvini
Kohei Ohba W 10 Kinshiro Usui
Rolando Magbanua KO 6 Jose Cota
Kohei Kono KO 6 Hendry Barongsai
Richard Samosir W 10 Hari Suharyadi
Jonathan Perez KO 3 Walberto Ramos

Junior Bantamweights

Vic Darchinyan KO 11 Jorge Arce
(*Retains WBA/WBC/IBF Titles*)
Timur Shailezov W 12 Julio Ler
Simphiwe Nongqayi W 12 Francisco Arce
Eliezer Aquino W 12 Jonathan Arias
Don Broadhurst KO 11 Isaac Owusu
Marc Hernandez W 12 Francisco Marquez
Eric Ortiz KO 5 Valentin Leon
Ricardo Nunez KO 2 Alex Olea
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin KO 1 Noriyuki Komatsu
Tenkai Tsunami W 10 Zhang Xi Yan
Big Yoo W 10 Roy Doliguez

Flyweights

Omar Narvaez KO 10 Rayonta Whitfield
Luis Concepcion W 11 Santiago Acosta
Omar Soto W 10 Humberto Pool
Karim Guerfi W 10 Alain Bonnel
Masafumi Tonomura KO 4 Tomoya Kaneshiro
Jesus Jimenez KO 4 Salvador Montes
Chris Edwards KO 4 Wayne Bloy

Junior Flyweights

Luis Lazarte W 12 Gustavo Rodriguez
Richard Garcia W 10 Masayuki Kuroda
Jose Rodriguez KO 3 Vicente Hernandez

Strawweights

Roman Gonzalez W 12 Francisco Rosas
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Donnie Nietes W 12 Erik Ramirez
Wanheng Menayothin W 10 Adi Nukung
Raul Castaneda KO 7 Jose Figueroa
Jesus Silvestre KO 5 Carlos Velarde
Ji-Hyun Park W 10 Hollie Dunaway

Andre Berto W 12 Luis Collazo

Biloxi, Mississippi: Whether heavily hyped prospect-turned-titleholder Berto was mildly exposed at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino, or Collazo simply added to his reputation as a stern test for any welterweight on the planet, is a compelling debate. What can't be debated is that together, the evenly matched young gladiators created the standout battle of 2009's first month. Both fighters showed plenty of skill and heart, but it was Berto who had more to lose and fought that way in the final round, providing the margin of victory in a fight that could have gone either way.

Collazo, 145¾, Brooklyn, New York, got off to the far better start, scoring with a southpaw one-two in the opening round that sent Berto, 145¾, Winter Haven, Florida, stumbling into the ropes, just barely able to avoid a knockdown. The 2004 Olympic representative of Haiti was hurt and had to hold Collazo repeatedly over the remainder of the round, drawing a warning from referee Keith Hughes (USA). The favored fighter continued grabbing Collazo in the next round and was warned again, and in the fourth, Hughes took a point from Berto for his persistent holding. Collazo backed him up consistently during that round and scored with his straight lefts through the upright banger's guard. With the point deduction and the fact that he'd probably lost three of the first four rounds, the undefeated Berto, 25, had quite a bit of ground to make up if he wanted to keep the zero at the end of his record.

But make up that ground he did, beginning in round five. Making his second defense of the WBC welterweight title, and facing a RING-rated opponent for the first time, Berto started mixing up his tactics. Sometimes he jabbed and moved, sometimes he upped the aggression and slugged, and he knocked the 27-year-old Collazo's mouthpiece out with a heavy right hand in the fifth. The sixth was the hardest round of the fight to score (THE RING made it an even round), but over the second half of the contest, Berto generally had more energy, a higher punch output, and was landing the more eye-catching shots. The undefeated fighter also went to the body diligently, slowing Collazo down somewhat. Still, the heavily tattooed New Yorker, who dropped a controversial decision to Ricky Hatton in 2006 and a wider one to Shane Mosley in '07, was hungry for a defining win and found a way to win a round or two over the fight's latter half.

Berto's stronger finish, however, proved to be the difference. He seemed to hurt Collazo to the body in round 12 and kept pressing forward, while Collazo didn't have enough left to make a retaliatory statement. The 12th round

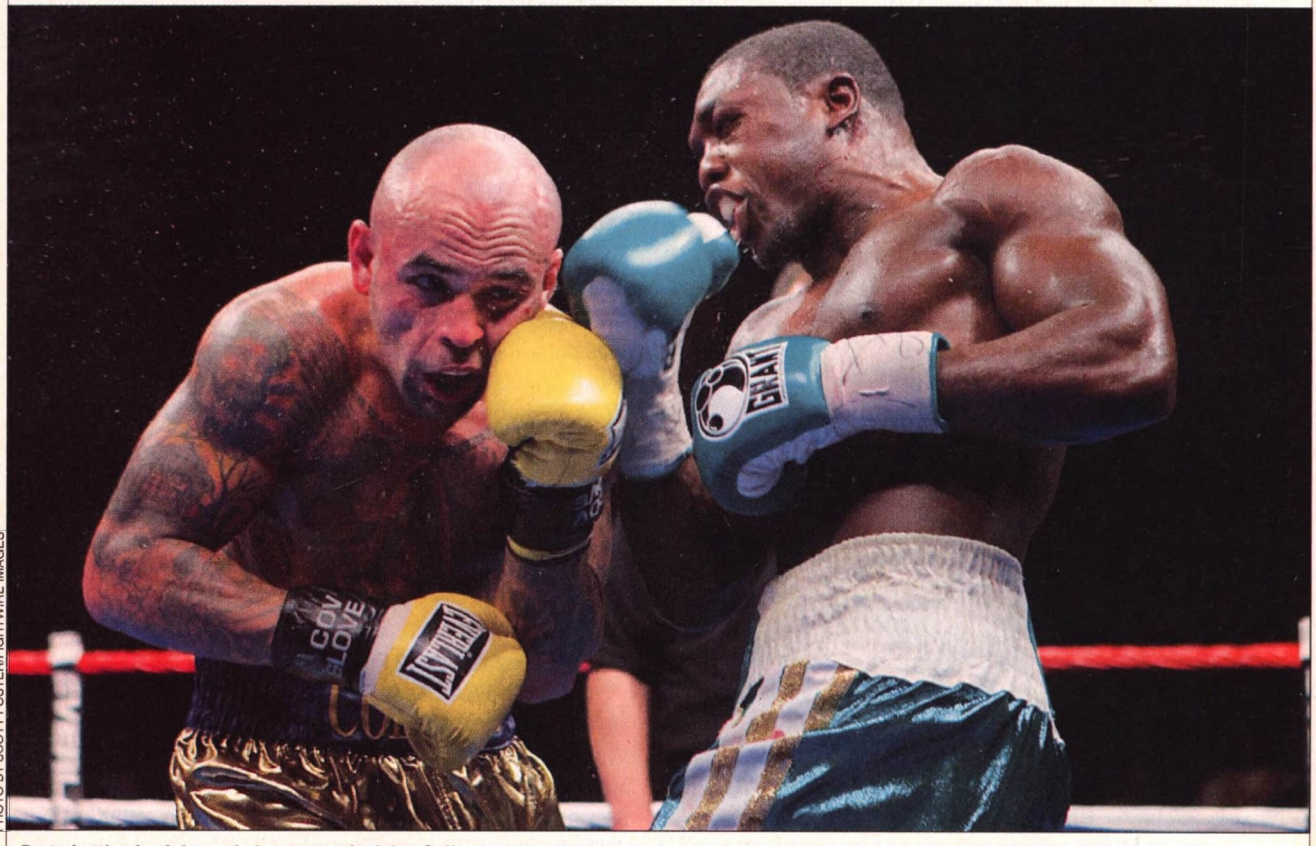


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Berto battles back from shaky start to decision Collazo

didn't matter on judge Bill Clancy's hard-to-justify scorecard of 116-111 for Berto, but it mattered plenty on the cards of Larry Ingle and Gary Ritter, who both saw it 114-113 for Berto. THE RING's card read 114-114.

Perhaps Berto, based on how mightily he struggled with Collazo, won't go as far as advertised. Or perhaps he will, and he'll have Collazo, 29-4 (14), to thank for the kind of fight that can make a young boxer better in the long run. Berto, 24-0 (19), showed flaws against the skillful southpaw, but he also showed an ability to make adjustments and a desire to win in the face of adversity.

Berto made a compelling statement about his fighting spirit, and if he signs for a rematch with the dangerous Collazo, as is being discussed for later this year, that statement will be instantly amplified.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **DiBella Entertainment**
(1-17-09)

Ruslan Chagaev Tech Win. 6
Carl Davis Drumond

Rostock, Germany: Having fought only once in 22 months since winning the WBA heavyweight title from Nicolay Valuev, former world amateur heavyweight champion Chagaev, 227, Hamburg, Germany, via Andizhan, Uzbekistan, bossed an overmatched Drumond, 229, Limond, Costa Rica, for six rounds before the bout was stopped by a cut near Chagaev's left eye caused by an accidental headbutt. Chagaev retained his belt for the second time on a technical points decision at the Stadthalle.

Officially, Chagaev is the WBA's "champion in recess" and he must face Valuev in a rematch by the end of June or he will lose this status. They were due to meet again last August before Chagaev pulled out with a ruptured Achilles tendon. In his only other bout since his points victory against the Russian, Chagaev beat England's Matt Skelton on points and the deceleration in his career has proven frustrating, as was an unsatisfactorily abbreviated fight against the 34-year-old, previously unbeaten Drumond.

In typical fashion, Chagaev, 30, threw fast, accurate jabs and left crosses out of his southpaw stance from the start of the bout and Drumond was clearly preoccupied with trying merely to slow him down. Several straight lefts pierced the Costa Rican's guard in round two and a left cross-right hook combination by Chagaev at the end of the round stunned the challenger, who came back strongly at the beginning of the third when he caught Chagaev on the side of the head with a right hook. Drumond landed another right before Chagaev regained his composure and re-established his jab. But he emerged from an exchange at close range with blood around his left eye, and Panamanian referee

[THE RING Fighter of the Month]

Shane Mosley

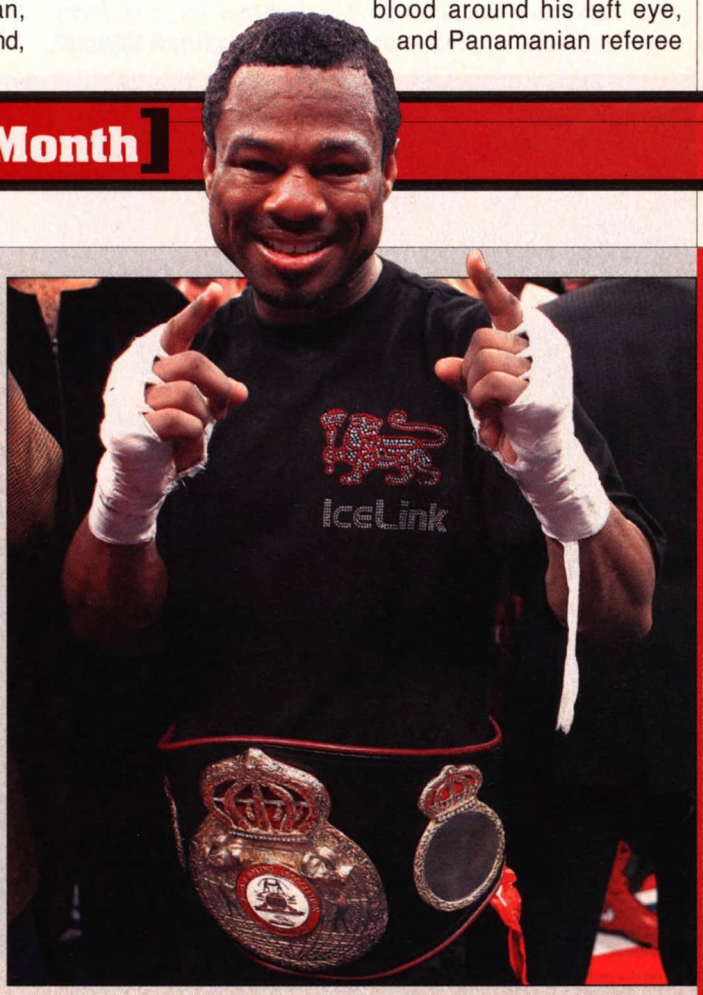


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

It had been a while since we'd seen him, so it was easy to forget about the flawless-fighting-machine version of Shane Mosley. The man who knocked out every title-fight challenger at lightweight, who upset Oscar De La Hoya to become welterweight king, who utterly destroyed his three 147-pound title challengers in highlight-reel fashion, who reached the top of nearly every pound-for-pound list—that fighter hadn't been heard from in about seven years. So it was natural to assume we'd never see him again, and we'd have to settle for an aging, still world-class, but no longer pound-for-pound elite Shane Mosley from here on out.

Antonio Margarito probably figured that was the Mosley he'd get when he signed to fight him. But Mosley shocked Margarito, and the rest of the boxing world, by turning back the clock a full seven years and looking—no exaggeration—better than ever. Sugar Shane provided perfect execution of a perfect game plan and an unimaginable finish, knocking out the supposedly iron-chinned Margarito.

We don't know where you went, but welcome back, Shane Mosley. Let's hope we don't have to wait another seven years to see you again.

Gustavo Padilla invited the ringside physician to inspect the cut, which was not deemed bad enough to stop the fight.

The pair clashed heads again in round four with Drumond, 26-1 (20), again emerging unscathed. The doctor took another look at Chagaev's cut and allowed him to continue. Drumond circled in an effort to stay away from Chagaev's punches, but he did not throw enough himself and got tagged by a succession of left hands before responding with a left uppercut. Chagaev, 25-0-1 (17), hurt Drumond with a left to the jaw in round five, but the Costa Rican responded with a left of his own a short while later, and at the end of the round, confusion reigned. The referee said that the cut was too deep to allow Chagaev to continue, but when the fighter protested, the doctor overruled the official and the action continued into round six. Both fighters exchanged hard shots, but at the end of the round, referee Padilla waved it over and the judges' scorecards came into effect.

Hector Afu (Panama) and Paul Thomas (England) scored 58-56 and Jean-Louis Legland (France) 60-54, all for Chagaev. THE RING had it 59-55.

"It was a sad end to the fight," Chagaev said. The rematch with Valuev, he indicated, will be next.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(2-7-09)
Brian Doogan

Andreas Kotelnik W 12 Marcos Maidana

Rostock, Germany: With the overwhelming majority of his bouts having finished inside three rounds, hard-punching Maidana, 140, Santa Fe, Argentina, was expected to give WBA super lightweight titleholder Kotelnik, 139¾, Hamburg, Germany, via Lvov, Ukraine, plenty of trouble at the Stadthalle, and he did. In an action-packed encounter, the Ukrainian had to withstand the 25-year-old challenger's early assault before he boxed his way to victory via split decision. It was Kotelnik's second defense of the belt that he claimed from Welshman Gavin Rees in March 2008.

"El Chino," a former Fedelatin light welterweight titlist and a quarterfinalist at the World Amateur Championships in 2003, had been taken into the eighth round just once previously. Only one opponent had lasted the distance, over six rounds. With five of his past seven bouts having taken place in Germany, he had built up a following and Kotelnik knew that he would be in a fight.

Predictably, Maidana came out fast, attacking the 31-year-old titleholder with sustained combination punching. Maidana's rugged unorthodoxy made it precarious for Kotelnik as he navigated his way through the minefield. It was not until the end of round three that Kotelnik began to find his rhythm, and in the fourth he rocked the Argentine with a left hook to the jaw before launching a heavy assault of his own to head and body. The fast pace was most impressive.

PHOTO BY JOERN PLOOEY/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Blood-smeared Chagaev nails Drumond with a right

Over the middle rounds, 2000 Olympic silver medalist Kotelnik, 31-2-1 (13), used his experience to outbox the challenger. Maidana, 25-1 (24), demonstrated a foolish disregard for defense and, while trying to nail Kotelnik with a wild attack, was caught repeatedly by the Ukrainian's straight and accurate punches. Wisely, he decided that he would have to rein in some of his more crude methods in an attempt to pace himself when it became clear that Kotelnik was not about to cave in, unlike the majority of his previous foes.

Maidana maintained an intense pressure, however, and Kotelnik needed to be vigilant for the duration of each round. With grim determination, he produced the better, more noteworthy work, but he was made to negotiate another torrid round in the 12th before he was safe. Maidana swarmed furiously, but Kotelnik picked his punches well, and at the bell the crowd was on its feet in appreciation of the tremendous efforts by both fighters.

Gustavo Padilla (Panama) scored 115-113 for Maidana, but Jean-Louis Legland (France) and Paul Thomas (England) both scored for Kotelnik, 115-114 and 115-113, respectively. THE RING also scored 115-113 for Kotelnik, who acknowledged, "I had a very strong opponent. He's a good, young prospect."

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(2-7-09)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Urango hammers Ngoudjo into the ropes

Juan Urango W 12 Herman Ngoudjo

Montreal, Quebec: A questionable defeat to Paulie Malignaggi last year, combined with a narrow split decision loss to Jose Luis Castillo in '06, helped to bolster Ngoudjo's image as a hard-luck fighter who was being denied a rightful place among the junior welterweight division's marquee names. Meanwhile, Ngoudjo's points win over former WBA beltholder Soulemayne Mbaye in June '08 was rather impressive, and it made him the favorite going in against hammer-fisted southpaw Urango in their fight for the vacant IBF title at Montreal's Bell Centre.

Urango's slight underdog role also owed to the fact that his widest exposure came in '07 when Ricky Hatton schooled him en route to decisioning the unseasoned Colombian in a one-sided washout. Urango's power was hardly in evidence in that bout, but it certainly has been since, and it figured prominently in his thorough domination of Ngoudjo.

With a mere 20 bouts on his resume, Ngoudjo's competitiveness at the division's highest level has been attributable to his tremendous physical strength at the weight combined with respectable, if unexceptional, boxing skills. This time, however, it was Urango with the bigger frame and more imposing muscle, and from the outset it was clear that Ngoudjo's strategy was to stick and move against a one-dimensional slugger.

But while Urango, 139, may fight in a single forward-moving gear, he did it to extraordinary effect against Ngoudjo, 139¼, who absorbed a heavy bombardment, particularly to the body, throughout the match. In the first two stanzas, a mobile Ngoudjo looked uncertain about his ability to stand up to Urango's power, and refused to commit fully to his punches for fear of getting countered.

In the third, Ngoudjo's worst fears were realized when he started to open up and found himself laid flat out on his back in the first minute after fielding a short left hook from Urango. The same punch would drop Ngoudjo—who hadn't fully shaken the fog from the early knockdown—for a second time in the final 30 seconds of the round. Later it was discovered that Ngoudjo had his jaw broken at some point in the round, and the outcome was pretty much written from that point forward.

From the fourth on, Ngoudjo, 29, continued to fight with the reluctance of a fighter who feared getting countered by a devastating punch. He may not have been known as a light puncher going in, but his fractured jaw, coupled with his opponent's power, turned him into one.

For his part, Urango, 28, couldn't have had a more inviting opponent in front of him. He swarmed in unrelentingly with sweeping hooks to the head and body that had Ngoudjo on the run for most of the fight until the Cameroon native, who now lives in Montreal, resorted to clutching Urango in the later rounds and trading in spots on the inside.

Interestingly, it was some desperate inside work by Ngoudjo, who unloaded in quick flurries that won him the

ninth round. Otherwise, the fighter never threatened to redirect the momentum. He clutched and grabbed through a prolonged 10th round that amazingly clocked in at 5:10 due to the timekeeper's perplexing error, and fought the last two rounds like a man solely focused on hearing the final bell.

Ngoudjo, 17-3 (9), went to the hospital immediately after the fight for examination and was subsequently operated on to repair his jaw, which included the insertion of a permanent steel plate. And while his status as a threat among top-tier 140 pounders has suffered a setback, his poor showing against Urango, 21-1-1 (16), might be excused by pundits on the basis of his injury.

Regardless, Urango's emphatic win asserts him as a key player in a talent-steeped division, rife with potentially intriguing matchups. Urango, who now resides in Miami, won by a wide spread of 120-106 from Robert Hoyle (USA), 118-108 from Richard Green (USA), and 116-110 from Pasquale Procopio (Canada). THE RING scored the fight 118-107 for Urango.

The referee was Marlon B. Wright (Canada).

Television: **ESPN2**

Promoters: **Groupe Yvon Michel (GYM), Seminole Warriors Boxing**

(1-30-09)

Omar Narvaez KO 10 Rayonta Whitfield

Chubut, Argentina: The bad news for purists is that WBO flyweight titlist Narvaez "broke" Carlos Monzon's record for consecutive title defenses by an Argentine. The good news is that now that he's done chasing Monzon, hopefully we won't have to hear about his insignificant pursuit of this mark anymore.

Monzon was recognized as the true middleweight champion and made 14 defenses in the 1970s, and technically, Narvaez passed the Hall of Famer at sold-out Nuevo Palacio Aurinegro Stadium with his 15th defense. But he's never been considered the top 112-pounder in the world, never attempted to unify titles, and never even fought anyone in THE RING'S top five. So the record is obviously quite hollow.

But this particular win, against the previously undefeated "Stingray" Whitfield, was not hollow. And the 33-year-old southpaw Narvaez certainly gets credit for longevity now that he's 6½ years into his alphabet title reign.

With a four-inch height advantage at 5'7", Whitfield, 111½, tried to keep Narvaez, 111¼, on the end of his jab, but the aggressive Argentine didn't have much trouble slipping or bulling his way inside. He counterpunched effectively and threw shots in combination, scoring to both the body and head of the 27-year-old Augusta, Georgia, native. Narvaez showed his versatility, thrilling the crowd by brawling with the challenger in the fourth, and then outboxing him deftly in the fifth. Narvaez' only particularly rough moment through the first five rounds came when an accidental clash of heads opened a small cut over his left eyebrow.

Narvaez' lead widened in the eighth when American referee Samuel Viruet deducted a point from Whitfield, 22-1 (11), for elbowing. And his lead became irrelevant in the 10th. Narvaez, 29-0-2 (18), scored with a quick flurry of about seven punches, and though Whitfield didn't stagger

PHOTO BY JOSE LUIS LAZARTE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Narvaez en route to 10th-round kayo of Whitfield

and didn't appear hurt, Viruet jumped in and called a slightly premature stoppage to the one-sided fight. Apparently, "history" couldn't be delayed any longer.

Promoter: **O.R. Promotions**
(2-7-09)

Jorge Solis KO 5 Monte Meza Clay

Jalisco, Mexico: This was no way for an eight-fight winning streak to end. In an IBF title eliminator at Auditorio Telemex de U.G. between veteran featherweight contenders, American Meza Clay was the victim of a quick-trigger stoppage from referee Pat Russell (USA) at the 1:39 mark of the fifth round in a fight he was winning up to that point. Local fighter Solis had indeed hurt Clay moments earlier and may have been in the process of turning the fight around after a slow start, but this ending robbed both men of a meaningful conclusion.

For the first four rounds, Clay, 126, Rankin, Pennsylvania, controlled the fight with his pressure. Solis, 126, Jalisco, Mexico, tried to establish his jab, but he couldn't keep his 5'2" opponent from getting inside, pinning him to the ropes, and landing combinations to the head and body. Solis, the brother of 108-pound titlist Ulises Solis, spent rounds three and four backpedaling and jabbing, reluctant to engage or throw his right hand. So Clay, 27, pursued as best he could, scoring with hooks and crosses whenever his opponent would stand still long enough. In the third, Clay landed his best punch, a left that rocked Solis.

The one-sided action continued until the midpoint of the fifth round, when Solis, 29, hurt Clay with a counter right hand. The American swayed for a moment, then backed into the ropes, and Solis pounced. Over the next 10 seconds or so, he threw 24 punches, but clear-headed Clay ducked and dodged and only seven of the punches landed. Referee Russell, however, stepped between the fighters and halted the contest, drawing a calm and professional but adamant, verbal protest from Clay.

For the lanky Solis, 37-1-2 (27) with 1 no-contest, it marked his fourth straight win since a 2007 kayo loss to Manny Pacquiao, and it makes him a mandatory to IBF beltholder Cristobal Cruz. Meanwhile, the loss snaps a solid winning streak for ESPN2 staple Clay, 28-2 (19), and he deserved more of an opportunity to weather the storm in a fight he was winning through four rounds.

Promoter: **Top Rank**
(1-31-09)

Robert Guerrero KO 1 Edel Ruiz

Los Angeles, California: There's nothing wrong with "The Ghost," but there was plenty wrong with making this stinker of a mismatch the co-feature for Shane Mosley-Antonio Margarito at Staples Center, an event that drew 20,820 fans.

Two-time featherweight titlist Guerrero hadn't competed since stopping Jason Litzau 11 months earlier. Ruiz, 30-22 (21), had lost seven of his last nine. As he and Guerrero,

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Guerrero returns with easy kayo of Ruiz

23-1-1 (16), felt each other out and circled, Ruiz, 31, of Los Mochis, Mexico, threw a right to the body that turned out to be a big mistake. Guerrero, 129½, countered with a left hook to the body, caught him flush, and Ruiz, 129¾, sank to his knees. He ended up with his butt in the air, gloves and the top of his head resting on the canvas. He stayed that way long after referee Jack Reiss (USA) kneeled, took one look, and waved it off 43 seconds into the scheduled 10-rounder. Ruiz eventually left under his own power.

The Ghost was set to go again March 7 on an HBO card against Indonesian Daud "Cino" Yordan, 23-0 (17). Guerrero, a hard-hitting, well-spoken 25-year-old with classy moves, hails from Gilroy, California, which bills itself as the garlic capital of the world. He said he was thrilled to perform before such a big crowd and that he hoped to draw similar numbers himself someday. Guerrero has moved up to junior lightweight, where tough, intriguing matches with the likes of Jorge Linares, Humberto Soto, and Rocky Juarez hopefully await.

Promoters: **Top Rank, Golden Boy Promotions**
(1-24-09)
Ivan Goldman

Edison Miranda KO 3 Manuel Esparza

Hollywood, Florida: Fighting for the first time in almost seven months and at an atypically high weight of 172¾ pounds, veteran super middleweight contender Miranda scored an easy tuneup win by taking on an opponent who had much greater layoff and weight issues to contend with. Journeyman Esparza lost four straight fights as a middleweight in 1999-2000, took eight years off from pro boxing, returned with a win as a 204-pounder in July '08, and quickly got back on the losing track against the vastly superior Miranda.

For the hard-punching Colombian known as "Pantera," it was a return to the site of his fourth-round knockout loss to middleweight titlist Arthur Abraham last June, the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. It didn't take long for the 28-year-old Miranda to establish his authority, as he dropped Esparza, 174½, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, with a right hand in the second round. In the following round, Miranda landed a heavy jab that appeared to break the 30-year-old Esparza's nose. Esparza, 20-9-1 (5) and best known for a loss to Tony Ayala Jr. in Ayala's first fight after a 17-year imprisonment, had no interest in battling through the injury, and he took a knee. American referee Jorge Ortiz' 10-count at the 0:52 mark of round three.

"When I lost to Abraham, I [struggled to] make weight," said Miranda, 31-3 (27), who fought Abraham at a non-title catchweight of 165 pounds. "But I feel good now and ready to climb back to the top. I'm glad to return with a win."

Promoter: **Seminole Warriors Boxing**

(1-14-09)

Yusaf Mack W 12 Chris Henry

Salisbury, Maryland: A near-capacity crowd of 5,900 acquitted themselves well in the fan support department at the Wicomico County Civic Center on Maryland's eastern shore. Unfortunately for Mack and Henry, virtually all of them were there to support their flashy hometown middleweight prospect, Fernando Guerrero, in the co-feature. Despite playing second fiddle, Mack and Henry put on a decent showing in the main event for the minority of customers who stuck it out after Guerrero's victory, with Mack taking a narrow decision for the regional NABA and NABF light heavyweight belts.

The 27-year-old Henry, 175, Houston, Texas, pressed the action in the early rounds, making the 29-year-old Mack, 174, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, back up frequently with jabs and rights to the body, while Mack countered with several uppercuts. After Henry was warned by referee Ken Chevalier (USA) for hitting behind the head, Mack picked up the pace in the third through the fifth, scoring with a big flurry that the rock-headed Henry took well. Mack scored again with left-rights and various combinations in the fourth, while Henry's work rate began to slow.

The sixth was the Philadelphian's best round, as he landed lead rights at will to the noggin of the Texan, wobbling Henry on several occasions, but as the crowd went wild, Henry threw back just enough to keep Chevalier from stopping the bout. Still, it was a wonder as to what kept Henry from going down in that round. Amazingly, Henry, 23-2 (18), rallied in the seventh, landing two lefts and a couple of combinations that got Mack's attention against the ropes. At this point, powerpunches were the main course on the menu of both fighters, with jabs being an afterthought.

Seeming to get a second wind, Henry began dancing on his toes, scoring in the eighth with rights to the head and left hooks to the body while Mack took the round off.

Mack, the superior boxer of the two, decided to stay outside and jab in the ninth, and it served him well, as he took back the initiative with rights to the head off of those jabs. But the unsinkable Henry kept coming forward in the 10th, holding his own in exchanges and momentarily stunning Mack with a right. The combatants went toe-to-toe in the 11th and 12th; once again Mack, 27-2 (16), wobbled Henry with rights to the top of the head that liquefied his legs and forced him to hold on.

Judge Malik Waleed (USA) scored it 115-113 for Henry, while Don Risher (USA) and Cathy Leonard (USA) saw it 115-112 and 116-112, respectively, for Mack. THE RING scored it 115-113 for the Philly fighter.

Now that Joe Calzaghe has announced his retirement, Mack hopes to get on the short list of those looking to challenge Chad Dawson. The more likely scenario would be taking on Hugo Garay for the WBA 175-pound title.

Television: **ESPN2**

Promoter: **Prize Fight Promotions**

(2-6-09)

Mike Greenhill

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mack ducks Henry's left and counters with a right

Orlando Cruz KO 5 Leonilo Miranda

Tulsa, Oklahoma: You never know what to expect when two undefeated but untested prospects go head to head. In this *ShoBox* battle of featherweights at the Osage Million Dollar Elm Casino, we still didn't know what to expect until the last

punch landed, a Cruz left cross to Miranda's chin that brought a sudden, spectacular end to a competitive fight 45 seconds into round five.

The 26-year-old Miranda, 127, Sonora, Mexico, was the slightly more proven and more touted of the two, having beaten faded ex-titlist Cruz Carvajal in his previous fight and boasting 23 knockouts among 24 wins. The 27-year-old Cruz, 127, San Juan, Puerto Rico, truly was taking an enormous step up, having faced nothing but journeymen and clubfighters in the 16 prior fights on his record. But Cruz had a solid amateur background—he was part of the 2000 Olympic team that featured Miguel Cotto and Ivan Calderon—and, as it turned out, a better punch than the mere six knockouts on his record indicated.

Little of note happened in the first two rounds of this battle of southpaws, but in the third, Miranda showed some of his vaunted power when he staggered Cruz and knocked his mouthpiece out with a heavy left hand. Cruz battled back with lefts of his own, however, drawing blood from the Mexican's right cheek before the round ended.

Through four rounds, the judges had it a split draw and it was truly either man's fight to claim. It didn't take long for the Puerto Rican to claim it. "El Fenomeno" landed a crushing counter left just about 30 seconds into round five, putting Miranda, 24-1 (23), flat on his back. Miranda made it to his feet just inside of American referee Steve Smoger's count, but wobbled back into the ropes and was in no shape to continue, which Smoger recognized, waving off the bout.

"I am so proud to win and prove myself," Cruz, 16-0-1 (7), said. "This is my first time fighting on national television. This is very emotional for me. I am so excited and humbled and this only motivates me to keep working and keep proving myself."

Television: **Showtime**

Promoters: **Holden Productions, Gary Shaw Productions**

(1-16-09)

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Buchanan (left) went the distance, but Ward controlled the fight

Andre Ward W 12 Henry Buchanan

Lemoore, California: By dominating the badly outclassed Buchanan in their *ShoBox* main event, Ward proved again that he should be fighting better opposition than what has been served to the 2004 Olympic gold medalist thus far.

The 6'1" Ward was in control from the opening seconds, when he had the 5'9" "Sugar Poo" backing up and turning away from his punches. Buchanan, 167¾, fought less like "Sugar" and more like the latter part of his nickname for most of a tedious 12 rounds. He continually stayed on the outside and showed little willingness to do anything other than survive against Ward, 166¼.

For his part, Ward, 18-0 (12), couldn't end this one early, despite following a game plan from trainer Virgil Hunter in which he would pick up the pace and look for the kayo in the final three rounds.

Ward began with an aggressive first round in which he pelted Buchanan, 17-2 (12), with right hands off jabs that came from a low-hanging left hand. Midway through the first, he nearly dropped Buchanan with a left hook to the jaw as the two began separating out of a clinch. Ward held his opponent up, preventing what would have been a controversial knockdown and the first of Buchanan's career. It turned out to be the best shot Ward landed all night.

The 24-year-old Oakland native began showing more patience in the second, when he kept his distance and easily moved out of the path of what little the 30-year-old Buchanan tossed at him. Ward continued mixing his punches well and attacking from several different angles. He worked the body and often switched to southpaw, including at the start of the fourth and seventh rounds.

Buchanan, whose other loss came via decision to southpaw Jean Paul Mendy in 2006, finally tried to work his way inside in the ninth, only to eat several hard jabs and straight rights. Ward went on the attack as planned in the 10th, and quickly absorbed a right to the jaw. It was the only significant shot Buchanan scored all night, though Ward quickly answered by landing two rights of his own. Buchanan continued getting hit, but was never badly hurt in the final three rounds.

Judges Marcos Rosales (Mexico), Ralph McKnight (USA), and Steve Morrow (USA) all scored it a shutout for Ward at 120-108. THE RING had the same tally. The fight allowed the gifted Ward to get in some needed rounds, but he probably didn't learn much in the process. The win certainly wasn't any kind of a statement for Ward, who hopes to be fighting for alphabet titles in 2009.

Television: **Showtime**

Promoter: **Goossen-Tutor Promotions**

(2-6-09) ■

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[New Faces]

(Continued from Page 24)

moved in with his father in New York City. Tor was involved with martial arts, ran track, played basketball, even took up fencing. But when his first and only choice of a college didn't accept him, Hamer wound up at the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi.

It's basically a one-bar, two-gas station small college town with little to do, according to Hamer, except "homework, get drunk all day, or workout at the gym. I went to the gym and started hitting the only heavybag they had in there. That's when I met 'Pops.'"

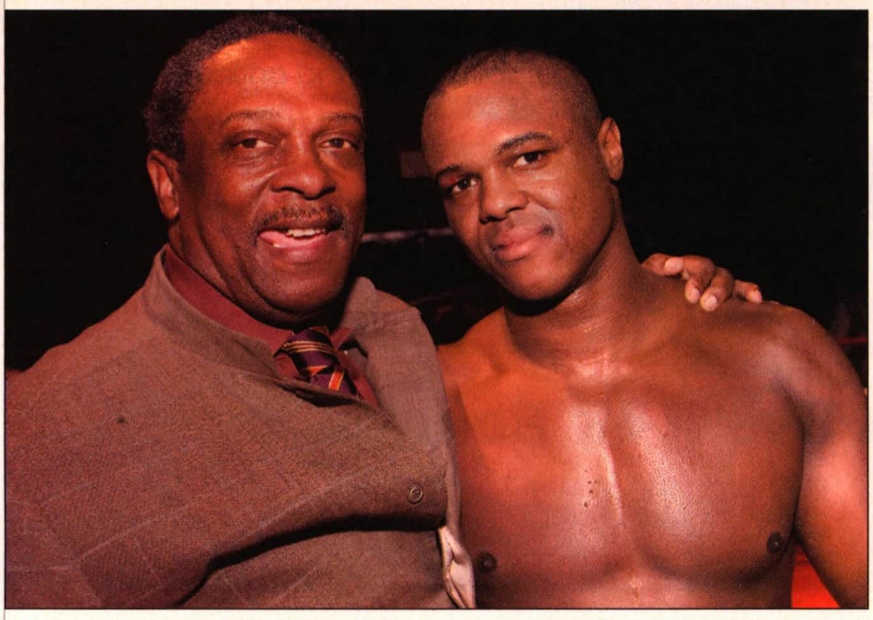
Hamer never knew Pops' name. But Pops could fit in any dingy boxing gym across the United States. Think of "Mickey" from the movie *Rocky* and you get the picture. Pops laid the foundation for Hamer, showing him the basics, honing and shaping a raw, energetic fighter into something Hamer wasn't even sure about pursuing.

Hamer's first step came at a novice Golden Gloves event in Syracuse, New York, against a 6'2", 300-pound opponent.

"I was petrified," Hamer recalled. "Here I am in upstate New York and the friend I stayed with up there was the only one I knew, besides Pops. I had no idea what was happening. This was my first time experiencing that; it was unnerving."

They had to take his blood pressure twice, it was so high. He won the tournament, as one of three novice heavyweights that day.

"To this day, I really don't know how I won," Hamer said, laughing. "I was in really good shape because there was nothing better to do there, but I couldn't fight. The pace in a boxing ring is so much different than sparring and working out. It was the first time I ever wore 12-ounce glove. The fight was more like a bar brawl. He threw me down, he bloodied my nose, and I got the decision. Truthfully, I'm not sure how, but it worked. I called my father and told him I won my first fight, and his first question to me was how were my grades."



Hamer had some convincing to do when it came to his father, Dr. Irving Hamer, taking him seriously about pursuing boxing. But Irving has given in to his son's aspirations and attends each of his fights, starting with Tor's stoppage of Joseph Rabotte in his pro debut.

Good enough for Hamer to transfer from SUNY Delhi into Penn State Delco, one of many satellite campuses to the Pennsylvania state school. From there, boxing took off. Hamer met Raysor, and through Raysor met Miles. His boxing ambitions leaped when he won the 2007 New York City Golden Gloves super heavyweight novice division. His grand scheme was an Olympic tryout, but he opted instead to go back to the New York City Golden Gloves, where he won the super heavyweight open division in 2008. By then, the U.S. Olympic team had been selected by coach Dan Campbell, who would resign, following the debacle in Beijing, China.

"Personally, I thought the whole process stunk, because you had kids having to maintain weight all year, and they sat around making weight, while they should have been fighting during a natural growth period," Raysor said. "If the system was run the way it normally was, Tor would have been on the '08 Olympic team."

And there's a likelihood Dr. Irving Hamer would have been in Beijing following his son.

"Tor's father was diametrically opposed to this in the beginning, but he has come around," said Miles, the elder statesman of the corner, who in the past has worked with Iran Barkley, Maurice Blocker, Simon Brown, and Davey Moore. "Tor is small by today's heavyweight standards, but he has that something that [Evander] Holyfield, another small heavyweight, had in his prime. If he gets hit, Tor will hit you back. He's still a work in progress, so we'll see how he comes along."

Tor's mother is still dealing with her only child boxing for a living. She won't let go of the old-school stereotype that all fighters wind up mush-mouthed and punch drunk. She would rather have Tor collect an unemployment check and attend grad school.

Dr. Hamer, however, has relented. It helps that he found out that DiBella, Tor's promoter, had a Harvard education. He's fully immersed himself in his son's career and is ringside each time Tor steps through the ropes.

"This is the only instance when I clearly got one over my father, because I never beat my dad in anything, a game of basketball or pool. He even used to beat me racing to the car, and then he retired from competing before I ever got the chance to get him back," Tor said. "So now every fight he's at, I might remind him, 'I'm still a dilettante?'"

And then wink. ■

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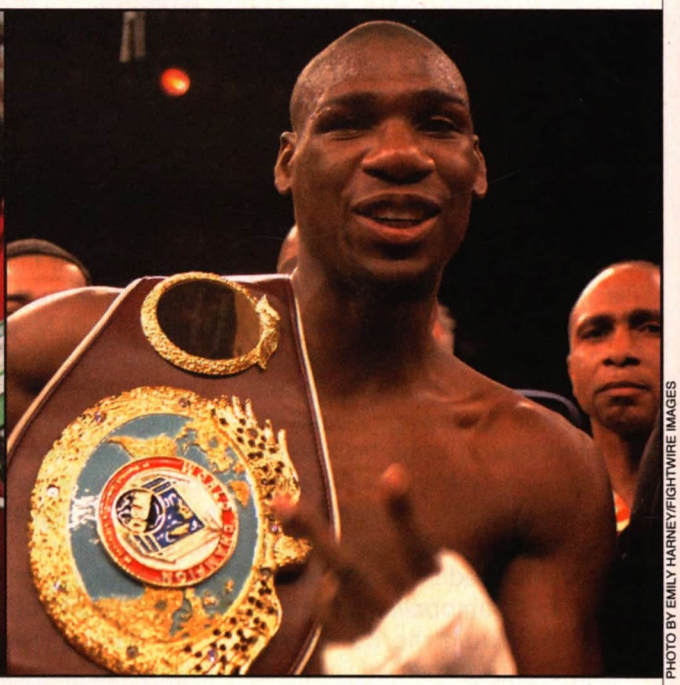
Middleweight

Winky Wright

Main Event 12 Rounds

Paul Williams

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO



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It wasn't all that long ago that Winky Wright was listed in everybody's pound-for-pound top 10. He was among the most widely recognized boxers in mainstream circles. He seemed on the verge of big-money bouts with Joe Calzaghe and Kelly Pavlik.

But since dropping a decision to Bernard Hopkins in July 2007, fans have been asking: "Where in the world is Winky Wright?"

The former junior middleweight champ spent most of 2008 turning down various fights, and then had to cancel a December comeback bout due to a hand injury. Dangerously close to being forgotten, Wright finally re-emerged by accepting a middleweight date with rising Paul "The Punisher" Williams, regarded by some as boxing's most avoided fighter.

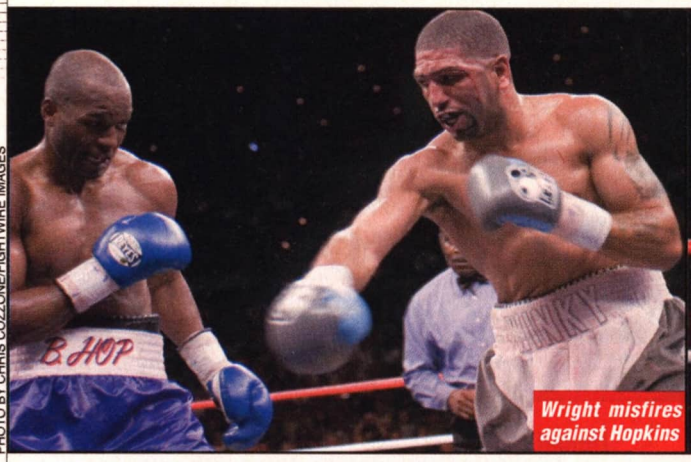
The bout, which will be aired on HBO, is an intriguing matchup pitting two busy southpaws whose careers are going in different directions. Williams is hoping to cash in with a win against a fading star. But wasn't that the same plot when Pavlik moved up to meet Hopkins last year, and when Antonio Margarito took on Shane Mosley in January?

Those two upsets had to factor into Wright's decision to return against the likes of Williams. Will he become the next veteran to revive his career at the expense of a young star, or will Williams bolster his name by dispatching a member of the old guard? We'll find out April 11 when the two meet at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas.

Winky Wright

Paul Williams

Record and World Rating



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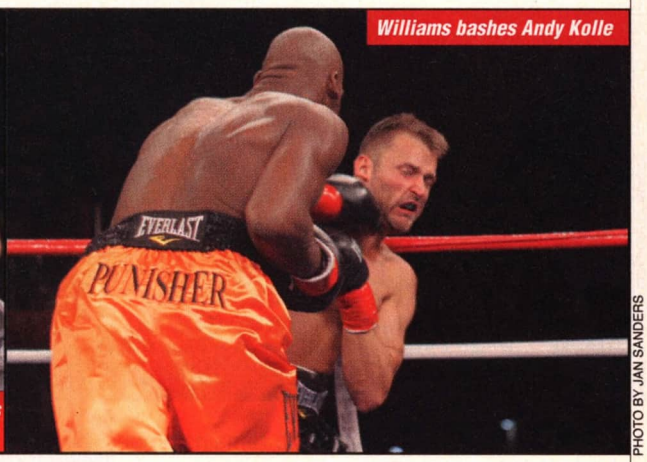
Wright misfires against Hopkins



Williams bashes Andy Kolle

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

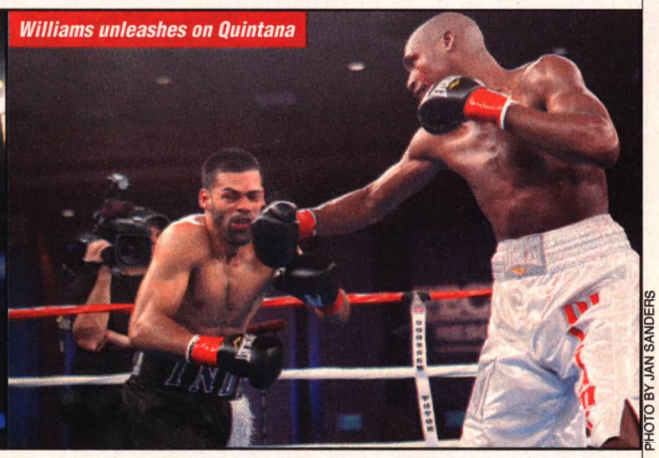
Is 51-4-1 with 25 knockouts ... Was 52-4 as an amateur ... Made pro debut in October '90 ... Failed to win WBA junior middleweight belt in August '94 ... Won WBO junior middleweight belt in May '96 and made three successful defenses before losing belt in August '98 ... Failed to win IBF junior middleweight belt in December '99 ... Won vacant IBF junior middleweight belt in October '01 and made five successful defenses ... Won world junior middleweight title, along with WBA and WBC belts, in March '04. Made one successful defense before vacating ... Failed to win world middleweight title in June '06 ... Failed to win world light heavyweight title in July '07 ... Not ranked by THE RING.

Is 36-1 with 27 knockouts ... Began boxing at eight after getting into a fight on school bus ... Had fewer than 30 amateur bouts before making pro debut in July '00 ... Turned pro at age 19 ... Developed slowly against limited opposition, spending first two years as a pro fighting mostly in the South ... Won four-round decision in pro debut, then stopped 13 straight opponents ... Won WBO welterweight belt in July '07 ... Lost WBO welterweight belt in first defense, in February '08 ... Regained WBO welterweight belt in June '08, but vacated to move up in weight ... Won WBO "interim" junior middleweight belt in November '08 ... Is rated number two at junior middleweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Wright tunes up Taylor with some chin music



Williams unleashes on Quintana

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

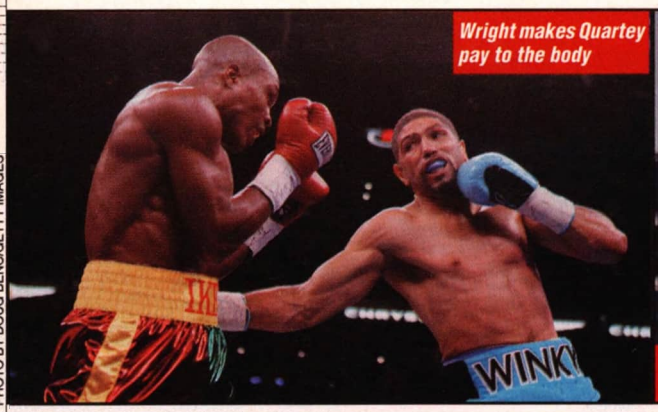
Is 37 years old ... Stands 5'10½" with 72-inch reach ... Southpaw ... Slender but muscular frame ... Never possessed much power, and has had even less pop since moving up from 154 pounds ... Fast hands ... Chin has withstood some of the better punchers in boxing ... Usually in great shape ... Doesn't cut easily.

Is 27 years old ... Stands 6'1" with 82-inch reach ... Southpaw ... Extremely tall and long-armed ... Has bounced from 147 to 160 pounds throughout career ... Excellent hand and foot speed ... Conditioned to fight at rapid pace ... Has showed solid chin ... Power seems to be increasing ... Prone to cuts.

Winky Wright

Paul Williams

Best Weapons



Wright makes Quartey pay to the body

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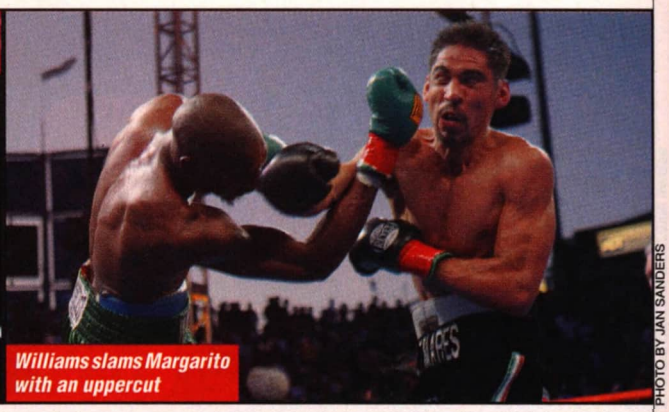


Williams slams Margarito with an uppercut

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Quick, accurate southpaw jab remains among the best in the business ... Throws a solid left hand off the jab that's stiff but not devastating ... Hand speed and reflexes make him outstanding counterpuncher ... Able to maintain busy pace without tiring.

Height and reach give him considerable size advantages over opponents ... Outstanding bodypuncher ... Not known for one-punch power ... Speed, volume, and size have led to most of his knockouts ... Nice jab, but doesn't rely on it.

Previous Fight

Suffered upset loss in July '07 to Bernard Hopkins via 12-round unanimous decision in unsuccessful bid for light heavyweight crown ... Sustained gash over left eye in third round from accidental headbutt ... Was bothered by Hopkins' move-and-hold style ... Struggled to land and was tagged with lead rights throughout ... Fight was close on cards until Hopkins picked up pace to win final four rounds to prevail by scores of 117-111 (twice) and 116-112.

Scored impressive eighth-round knockout of veteran Verno Phillips last November ... Phillips hadn't been stopped since fifth pro fight, back in '88 ... Bled throughout from cut above right eye caused by accidental headbutt in first round ... Took some shots, including right hand in second, but Phillips lacked power to hurt him ... Used busy pace and bodywork to take control by the third ... Bout was halted at end of eighth on advice of ringside physician.

Quality of Opposition

Took on some of sport's top names from 2004-'07. Won decisions over Shane Mosley (twice), Felix Trinidad, Ike Quartey, and Sam Soliman ... Fought to draw with then-middleweight champ Jermain Taylor ... First 16 bouts were in Florida, then fought in eight countries and four continents from 1993-'98 ... Decisioned by veteran Julio Cesar Vasquez in '94 ... Lost controversial decisions to Harry Simon ('98) and Fernando Vargas ('99) ... Won three fights against Bronco McKart.

Carefully developed. Matched soft early, but sparred with several high-level fighters ... Decisioned unbeaten Luis Hernandez and former Olympic medalist Terrance Cauthen in '04 ... Stopped unbeaten Walter Matthysse (KO 10) in May '06 and faded Sharmba Mitchell (KO 4) three months later ... Took huge leap in class against Antonio Margarito in July '07, and won unanimous decision ... Three of last four fights have been against world-class opposition: Carlos Quintana (L 12, KO 1) and Verno Phillips (KO 8).

Defense

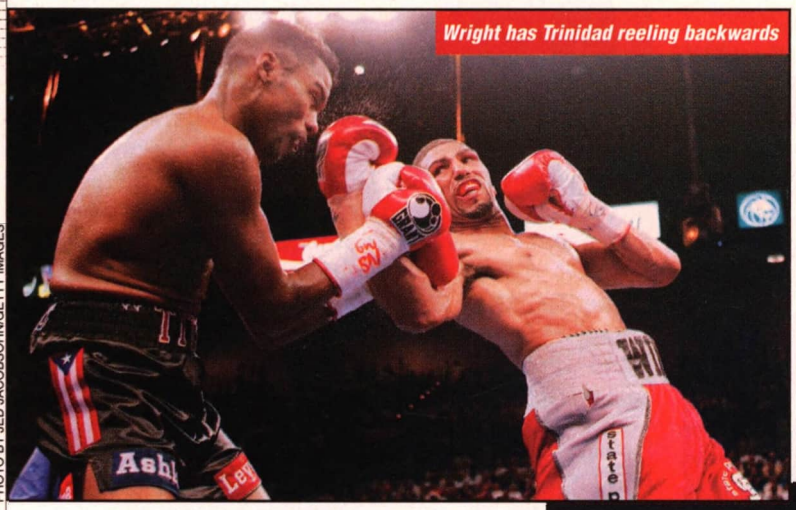
Has gotten easier to find, but still a difficult target ... Used to employ foot speed and head movement to elude punches. Has gotten more flat-footed with age and now relies on blocking with gloves, arms ... Was caught frequently by clutch-happy Bernard Hopkins, who attacked from angles ... With exception of five knockdowns against Julio Cesar Vasquez, has always responded well when hit.

No defensive wizard ... Could use reach to maintain safe distance, but instead employs busy style that leaves him open to counters ... Especially susceptible to bodyshots on the inside ... Opponents must get through those long arms to reach him, however ... Quick feet and decent head movement make him somewhat elusive ... Has never been dropped or badly hurt when tagged.

Winky Wright

Paul Williams

Style

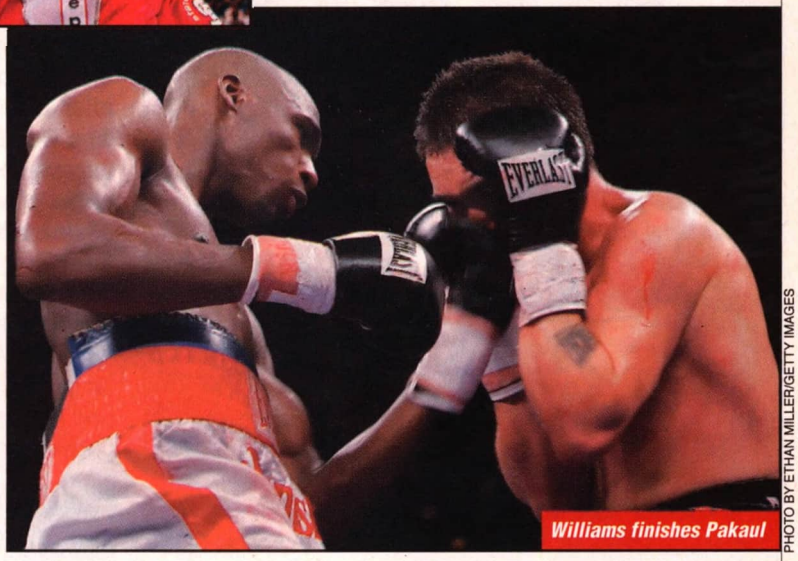


Wright has Trinidad reeling backwards

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Slick, clever boxer ... Relies on speed, southpaw jab and high work rate to control a fight ... Also cerebral counterpuncher who knows how to capitalize on opponents' mistakes ... Will press action or box from safe distance ... Expert at tying up when opponents get too close ... Seems to fight at his best when most is on the line.

Aggressive volume puncher who overwhelms with height, pace, and speed ... Uses foot work and athleticism to attack from angles ... Wears down opponents with body attack ... Usually attempts to establish distance, but showed willingness to bang at close range against Verno Phillips ... Can be outboxed on inside. Struggled against Carlos Quintana and Antonio Margarito when they got close.



Williams finishes Pakaul

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

The Questions

How will he respond to a 21-month layoff? Should he have taken a tuneup fight? Can he outbox a much bigger opponent? Does he still have the hand speed to counter Williams' offense? Can he afford to stand and block 100 punches per round from Williams?

Will he struggle with Wright's slick southpaw style, as he did against lefty Carlos Quintana? Can he be as effective at middleweight as he was at junior middleweight and welterweight? How will he handle Wright's experience? Can he hit hard enough to earn Wright's respect?

The Outcome

Predictably, Williams will try to swarm the light-punching Wright. He'll struggle to get into a groove and become frustrated, however, as Wright uses a plan similar to the one Shane Mosley employed to upset another volume puncher in Antonio Margarito. Showing that he still has the hand speed and head movement to get past Williams' flurries, Wright will continually thump Williams with quick counters en route to taking a unanimous decision.

April 1938

COVER STORY: "The Middleweight Boiling Pot" by Myer Ackerman is an overview of the middleweight division, as it appeared in early-February of '38. The 160-pound class hadn't had a dominant champion since Mickey Walker relinquished the title in 1930, but Ackerman felt that "in 1937 there came to the fore a little army of middleweights who surpass in ability any that have seen action during the past decade, with the possible exception of a mere handful, among them Mickey Walker, Tiger Flowers, and Harry Greb."

The eight middleweights who grace the cover are the focal point of the article. They include Freddie Steele (who THE RING recognized as world champion), Ken Overlin, Marcel Thil, Glen Lee, Jock McAvoy, Fred Apostoli, Ben Brown, and Al Hostak, who would knock out Steele in July '38 to win the title. Overlin also briefly wore the crown, beating Ceferino Garcia in 1940.

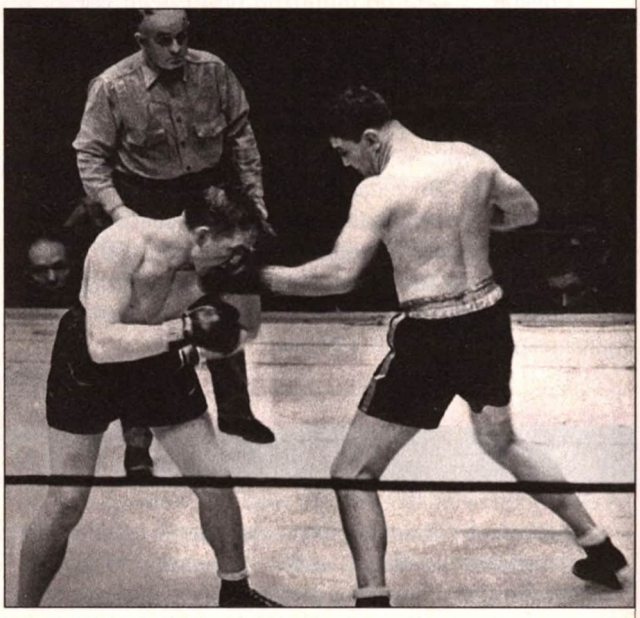
World Champions

(for the period ended February 10)
Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: John Henry Lewis
Middleweight: Freddie Steele
Welterweight: Barney Ross
Lightweight: Lou Ambers
Featherweight: Henry Armstrong
Bantamweight: Harry Jeffra
Flyweight: Benny Lynch

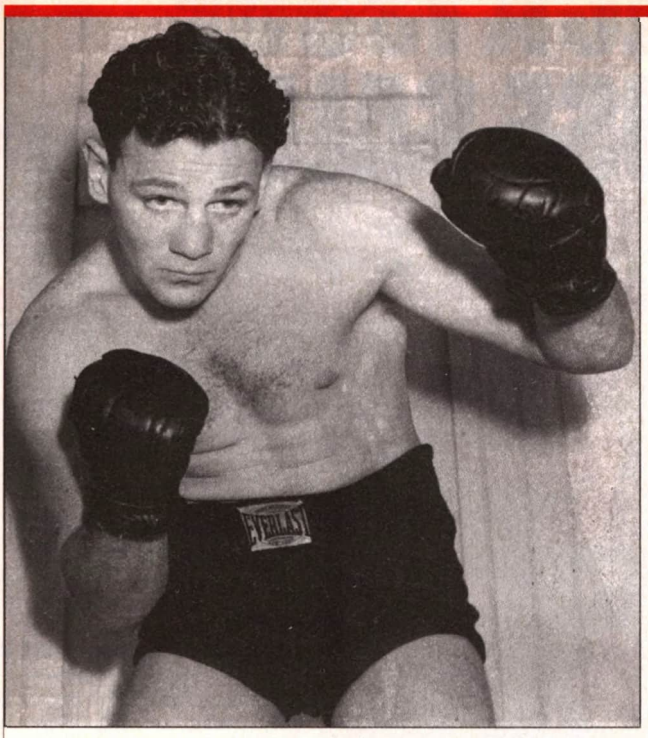
"Midnight Strikes For Ring's Cinderella Man" by Daniel M. Daniel marked the retirement of former heavyweight champion James Braddock, who had just outpointed British contender Tommy Farr in his first bout after losing the title to Joe Louis. Promoter Mike Jacobs, who wanted to stage a Braddock-Farr rematch, was not happy with Braddock's decision, but Daniel felt the 32-year-old ex-champ had done the sensible thing.

"In quitting the ring at this time, he has done a very wise thing," wrote Daniel. "Jim is an old man as ringsters go. He would have risked serious injury had he gone on."

Editor Nat Fleischer also led his "Nat Fleischer Says" column with his thoughts on Braddock's decision to hang up his gloves, addressing Braddock with these words: "The ring is all the richer for your having been in it, and all the poorer for your retirement."



Braddock (right) wins his final fight



Pastor was on the comeback trail

"The Road Back" by writer/illustrator Ted Carroll spins off of heavyweight Bob Pastor's comeback, following a loss to Joe Louis, to examine the comebacks of other fighters. Carroll cites Kid Chocolate, who hadn't held a title since 1930 but was unbeaten in his last 35 bouts; Pedro Martinez, who was rebuilding following a majority decision loss to lightweight champ Lou Ambers; and heavyweight Gunnar Barlund, who was on a modest winning run after losing three in a row in '37.

Of the four, only Pastor and Montanez enjoyed much success, but even that was limited. Pastor got a rematch with Louis in September '39, but was knocked out in the 11th round. Montanez challenged Henry Armstrong for the welterweight title in 1940, but was stopped in the ninth round.

"New Faces" featured English lightweight Jimmy Vaughan, Canadian featherweight Davey Paul, and a 22-year-old middleweight by the name of Archie Moore. The man who would go to set an all-time knockout record and hold the light heavyweight championship for longer than any man had only 16 pro bouts when this was written, but was already a main event fighter. Still, despite his great start and continued success, Moore didn't get his first title shot until 1942!

"Smoke Rings From Pittsburgh" by William Parker covers Billy Conn's 12-round decision over Honeyboy Jones at the Motor Square Garden. "Conn and Honeyboy electrified those in attendance by staging a slam-bang jam session with gloves in the closing frames," wrote Parker. "Conn got the decision and earned it."

It was Conn's fourth win over Jones, whom he would beat a fifth time later that year. Then, in 1939, Conn decisioned Melio Bettina to claim the vacant light heavyweight title.

"Fanfare From Missouri" by local correspondent Robert D. Dana notes that light heavyweight champion John Henry Lewis "again proved his is the Midas touch when it comes to making the turnstiles rotate." Dana was referring to the more than 8,000 customers who showed up at the St. Louis Auditorium to watch Lewis kayo Marty Gallagher in a non-title bout.

"Timely Chatter From Great Britain" by John S. Sharpe highlights the sport's ability to attract large crowds for middle-of-the-road bouts. Two shows at Earls Court drew a combined attendance of approximately 17,500, when 8,500 showed up to watch Frank Hough decision Harry Staal, while 9,000 fans were on hand a week later for Hough's victory over Marcel Lauriot. ■

Lewis greets some of his young fans

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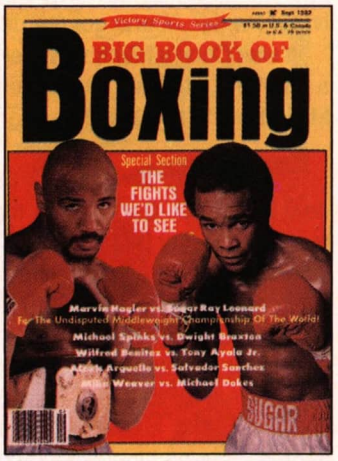

Napoles-Griffith, Ali, Charles, 10 meanest fighters, Spinks-Galindez dream fight.

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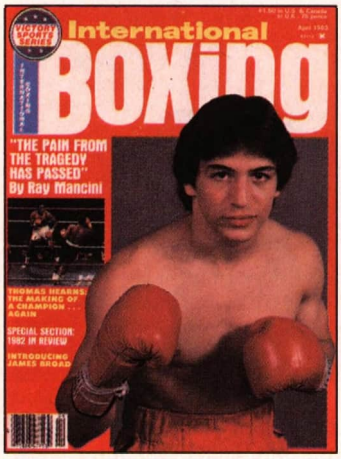

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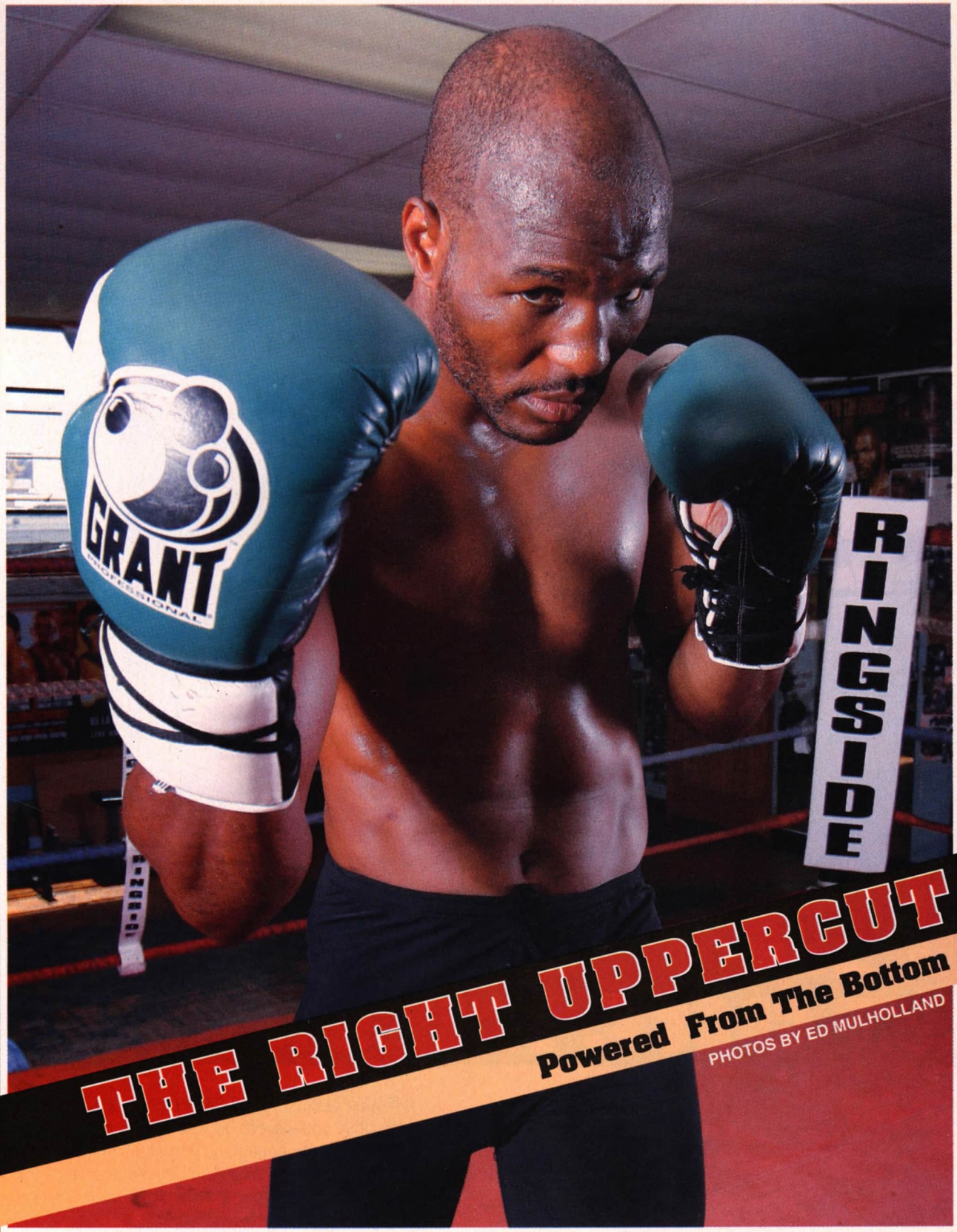
[Perfect Execution]

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



THE RIGHT UPPERCUT

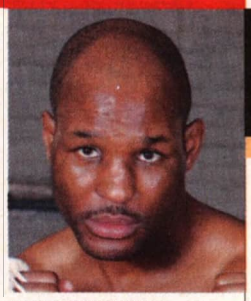
Powered From The Bottom

PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

The right uppercut is one of my favorite punches. I hurt Felix Trinidad a bunch of times with right uppercuts before I knocked him out in New York in 2001. Way back in 1996 I fought an undefeated kid named Joe Lipsey and hit him with a right uppercut that froze him in his tracks. Knocked him out without him even knowing it. A followup right put him out and the kid never fought again. That's what the right uppercut can do for you—if you learn how to throw it the right way. It's most effective against shorter guys and guys who fight out of a crouch.

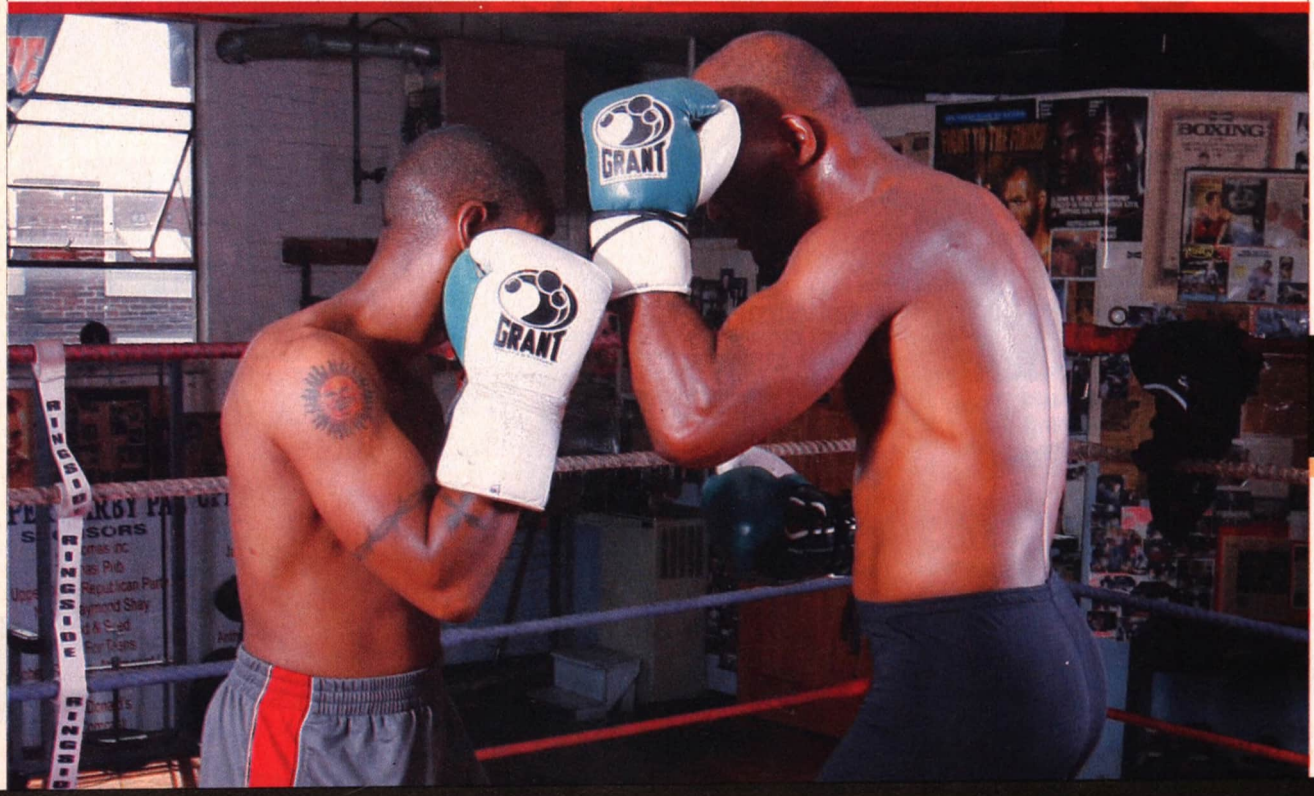
If you throw it properly, your opponent never sees the right uppercut coming. That's what makes it so dangerous. He's looking at you expecting straight punches, jabs, or right hands down the middle, or hooks that come from the sides. He can't see an uppercut, because it's coming from underneath. He's not looking down at the canvas. If he is you can hit him with a lot more than just the uppercut.

You have to throw the right uppercut from in close; it's not an outside punch. When you throw it from too far away, you leave yourself open to a counter, which you'll see on the following pages. It's a punch that works well on the inside, and it's powered from the bottom up: from your right foot, up through your legs, through your hips, and into your right hand. Power always comes from the bottom up, not from the top down.



BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)



GET CLOSE, VERY CLOSE

SEE HOW CLOSE I AM TO DANNY DAVIS HERE? That's how close you want to be when you throw the right uppercut; close enough so you can hit him without straightening your arm. Also notice I'm on balance with my hands up and chin down and looking straight ahead, as always.

DRIVE IT FROM THE BOTTOM UP

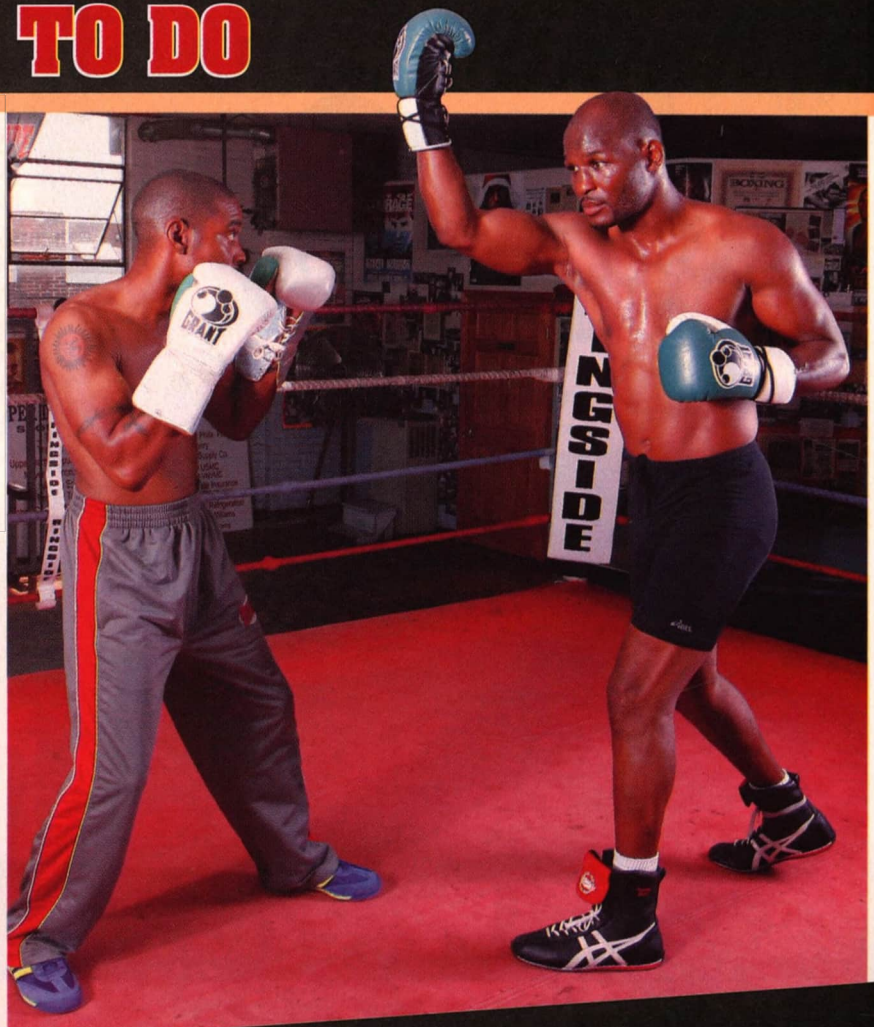
DO NOT DROP YOUR GLOVE TO THROW THE PUNCH. Just dip your right shoulder slightly and shift your weight so that most of it goes to your right foot. Push off with the ball of your foot. That brings the power up through your foot and leg. Your hips rotate slightly to the left. Drive that punch up through your opponent's guard. When the punch lands, your palm should be facing you.

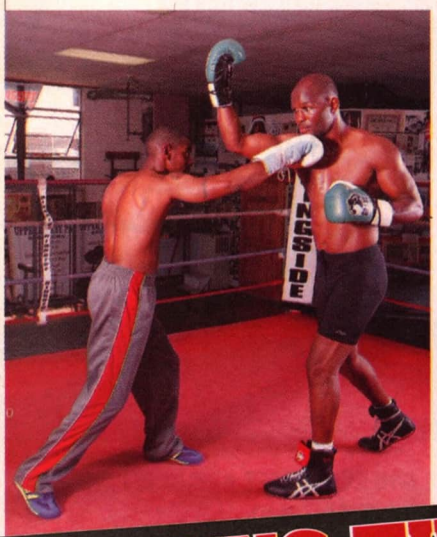
GETTING POSITION

NOTICE WHERE MY FEET ARE IN RELATION TO DANNY'S HERE: My lead foot is between his two feet. That's just where you want to be. He can't do anything to get away and you're close enough to send the punch up through his guard. Also note that my left foot is flat on the floor and my right heel is off the floor, driving the punch up.

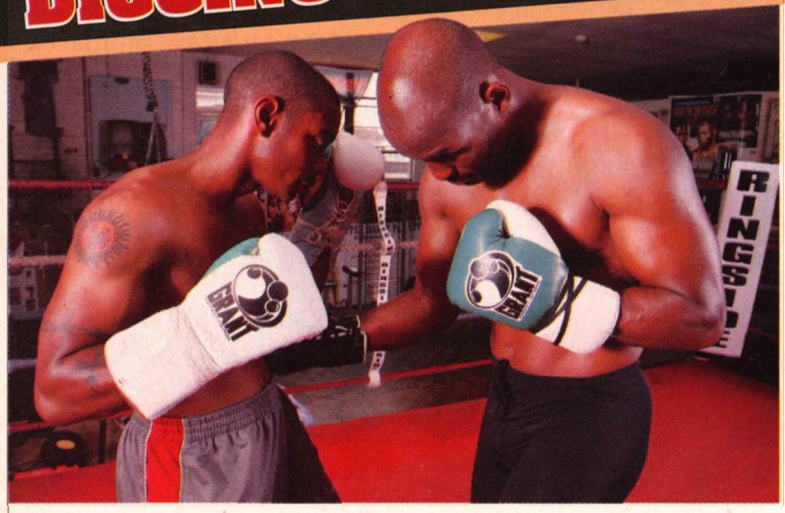
WHAT NOT TO DO

THE WRONG WAY TO DO IT: Chin up, hands down, from way too far outside. If your opponent is any good, he only has to see that once before he knows that next time he sees it coming he should step back, wait for the punch to miss, and then drill you with a counter right. That's exactly how Evander Holyfield knocked out Buster Douglas to win the heavyweight title.



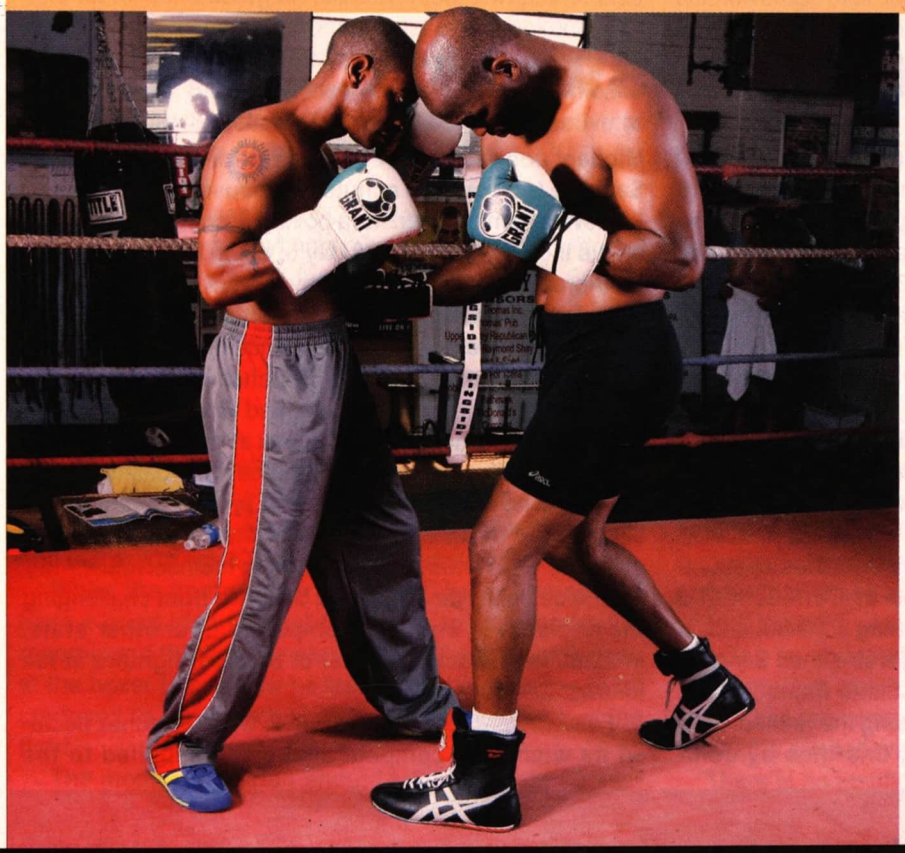


DIGGING THE BODY



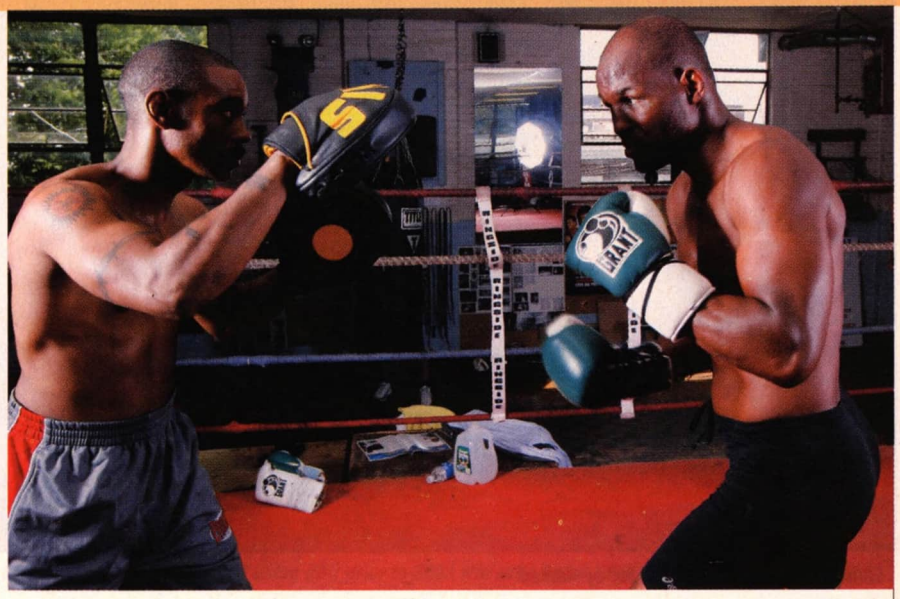
THE RIGHT UPPERCUT TO THE BODY WORKS THE SAME WAY AS IT DOES TO THE HEAD, EXCEPT YOU'RE AIMING LOWER. And when you're aiming for the body, you want to move a little to your left so you have a clear path right down the middle. You want to land that punch right in the pit of his stomach, not on the side, like you would a hook. Note that my chin stays tucked.

DRIVE IT THROUGH



DON'T JUST HIT THE BODY. Drive that uppercut hard like you want to get up under his rib cage. You want to hit those organs. Notice again my legs here: left foot flat on the floor, driving the punch up with the right foot and leg.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE



I'M A LITTLE FARTHER AWAY THAN I'D LIKE, but here I'm about to drive a right uppercut into the pads. That's why we practice.

[The Fight Doctor]

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Questions And Answers ...

Former featherweight contender Augie "Kid Vegas" Sanchez went before the Nevada Commission December 16 to regain a license to box after not competing since 2001. The Commission did not make a decision and referred the issue to its medical board. Sanchez is only 31 years old with 28-3 (25) record. Why shouldn't he be allowed to fight?

MARK SCHAEFFER
Baltimore, MD

Sanchez, the former 1996 United States amateur featherweight champion, turned professional in 1996. No one ever questioned his profound punching power, but he became known for a suspect chin.

In August 2000, Sanchez suffered a brutal fourth-round knockout against Naseem Hamed at Connecticut's Foxwoods Resort. After slowly regaining consciousness, he was transported out of the ring on a stretcher. Sanchez came back and stopped an aging Luisito Espinoza and Daniel Jimenez. But 15 months following the Hamed fight, Sanchez was knocked out again, this time by John Michael Johnson in Indio, California. The 24-year-old Sanchez took over 30 minutes to recover.

Nevada denied Sanchez a boxing license in 2002 based on his increasing susceptibility to being knocked out and an increasing inability to recover from a punch. At the time, I was head of the Commission's Medical Advisory Board. We heard compelling evidence from Top Rank cutman Miguel Diaz, who knew Sanchez well and worked most of his professional bouts, and *Friday Night Fights* commentator Teddy Atlas, who was at the Johnson fight.

Although this was listed as a medically based denial, there was no one medical test that proved Sanchez was at increased risk. Nevertheless, the knockouts, which are available on Youtube.com, speak for themselves.

The denial never precluded Sanchez from challenging the decision in court or competing in another state. Instead, he became a trainer of amateur fighters at his in-laws' Las Vegas gym.

Fast-forward to December 2008, when Sanchez decided he wished to compete again. He reapplied to the

PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Sanchez after being knocked out by Hamed

Nevada Commission, which has asked its Medical Advisory Board for a recommendation.

Seven years away from boxing isn't going to change someone's chin or ability to recover from head blows. No physician can prove this point, but the proof is in Sanchez' fight history, including an amateur record where he also had difficulty recovering from at least one knockout.

It is my hope that under the Nevada Commission's new chairman, Bill Brady, they will be strong. This means denying Augie Sanchez a license to box, irrespective of the consequences, including a court battle.

I attended a recent ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* card in Primm, Nevada. I couldn't help but notice that the ring doctor pushed the trainer out of the way to look at Kevin Burnett between rounds. How can the trainer give advice to his fighter with the doctor in the way?

BRIAN KNOX
Las Vegas, NV

You make an excellent point. The trainer has less than one minute to advise his charge. A good ring physician knows how to evaluate the fighter *and* enable the trainer and cutman to work. This is Ring Medicine 101!

When the doctor enters the ring, he or she should have a good idea of what they wish to accomplish: 1) recommend the fight be stopped; or 2) get a quick peek at the boxer to see how he feels, how he sounds—is he confused, is his speech slurred, does he want out of the fight.

The medical decision should take less than 30 seconds. The best way to make an accurate determination is to watch the boxer interact with his trainer. If the doctor throws out questions, the boxer is often too focused to answer, which can present a misleading picture of his condition.

The physician should enter the ring (and not lean over the ring ropes) so he/she can get a complete look at the boxer's face, listen to the communication between the fighter and his corner, and make a decision. This doesn't involve getting in anyone's way.

The Nevada ring physician you mentioned was new. But that is no excuse.

Nevada continues to have a problem with several ring physicians. They recently hired four new ones. Yes, it is tough to get experience without experience, but the repercussions are too great to take a risk. The state needs to stop using physicians that can't work as a team with the referee, understand the flow of a fight, or are untrained.

The last training seminar Nevada held for its physicians became a grievance session with several jockeying for position in front of the commissioners to place themselves in a better light. There was no decision-making regarding how to handle situations like evaluating fighters between rounds.

If Nevada really cares about fighter safety, they must acknowledge their inadequacies, stop using doctors that do a substandard job, and institute formalized instruction, especially before assigning inexperienced officials.

Should blood doping with EPO be illegal in boxing given that many fighters do it naturally by altitude training?

HECTOR VAN CHERI
Las Vegas, NV

Great point! EPO is a synthetic version of the naturally occurring hormone erythropoietin that increases red blood cell concentration. It was designed to be used by cancer and renal failure patients suffering from anemia. Recently published BALCO doping calendars showed that Shane Mosley used EPO before his September 2003 win against Oscar De La Hoya. Many fighters, including De La Hoya and Mosley, have sought training at high altitude to increase endurance and blood counts. But EPO is much easier to use, takes less time, and the results are greater than those that can be accomplished naturally.

But, the risks of synthetic EPO are great for every athlete. Too much blood in a restricted space will sludge in small arteries, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Its use has permanently tainted cycling, where more than 25 deaths are believed to be directly from the drug.

There is no justification for EPO use in boxing. ■

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mosley admitted using EPO prior to 2003 win over De La Hoya

By Jim Bagg

Caught Dread-Handed

There's a famous old saying, surely first uttered by someone who wasn't too fond of playing by the rules, "It's only cheating if you get caught." Well, it's time to add the Antonio Margarito clause to that adage: "If you *do* get caught, the stuff you didn't get caught for is cheating too."

Fair or not—and we'll probably never know for sure—all 37 wins on Margarito's record now have an asterisk attached in the minds of the pugilism public because the "Plastered Bastard" (a much more fun nickname than the lame "Tijuana Tornado") was nailed with illegal knuckle pads prior to his fight against Shane Mosley. The win where Miguel Cotto was outboxing him then suddenly started looking like he'd flown face-first through a windshield? Highly suspect. The knockouts in which Kermit Cintron showed the punch resistance of Kermit The Frog? As open for debate as the issue of legalizing frog-pig marriages. The first-round knockout of Golden Johnson? Totally bogus. That should have taken at least two rounds if everything was on the up-and-up.

The truth is, it's quite possible that Margarito won every single one of those fights completely legally. But it does seem a smidge illogical that his trainer, Javier Capetillo, would suddenly decide, after 43 fights, to begin getting creative with the hand-wrapping process against clear underdog Mosley. Maybe Capetillo and Margarito are only guilty of cheating once. But once was all it took to taint everything they've done together.

And make no mistake, what they did—or at least attempted to do before Mosley's trainer, Naazim Richardson, smelled something foul—was a serious offense. There's cheating, and then there's cheating in a way that threatens to cause permanent injury.

The Baggmeister just happens to be an expert on the former type of cheating. He is a veteran of multiple divorces after all, and let's just say that Wife Number Two should have known what she was getting into because she was the other woman when Wife Number One was still Mrs. Baggareeno. Then when ol' Baggwood Bumstead strayed again during his second marriage, he tried to use the excuse, "It wasn't cheating, because she reminded the Bagginator of you." Somehow, that wasn't good enough.

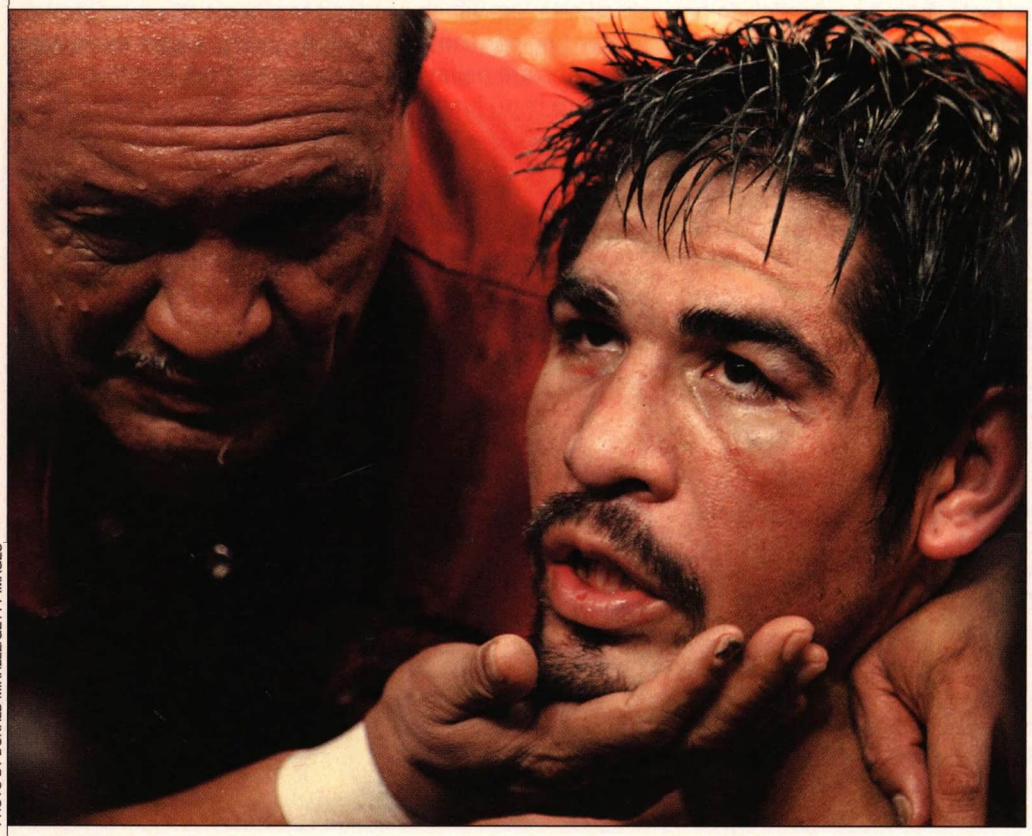


PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

It's hard to feel sorry for Capetillo and Margarito

In high school (yes, we're talking about the Mesozoic Era), the Baggtastic might have occasionally spent his allowance paying other kids to write his term papers, and there was that one time he broke into his history teacher's office and stole the answers to the final exam. (Hey, if your idea of American history involves Wash-

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Would loaded gloves have helped against Sugar Shane?

ington and Lincoln but not Sullivan and Dempsey, then Baggarooney isn't all that interest in learning it.)

The Baggapotamus has also had a couple of run-ins with Uncle Sam because his taxes weren't quite filed on time (lost in the mail, naturally), and when a neighbor offered to splice yours truly in on his cable television for free back in the '90s, it was an easy offer to say yes to.

But there's a pretty stinkin' clear line between all of those forms of cheating and the one that the California commission found Capetillo and Margarito guilty of. If the Baggly-Waggly's infractions were equated to what goes on in the boxing ring, we'd be talking about mauling a guy a little bit during a clinch or landing an occasional low blow. That's a whole different universe from slipping a substance that can harden like plaster into your gloves.

But in the ultimate irony, even if Margarito had gotten away with loading his gloves against Mosley, it probably wouldn't have mattered, since you can't hurt what you can't hit. Antonio Marginal hardly even scored with any glancing blows, much less any flush ones. He could have fought with horseshoes in there, or maybe even with hand grenades, and it wouldn't have made a difference. Mosley could have worn 16-ouncers while Margarito went bare-knuckled. The result still would have been a one-sided victory for Sugar Shane.

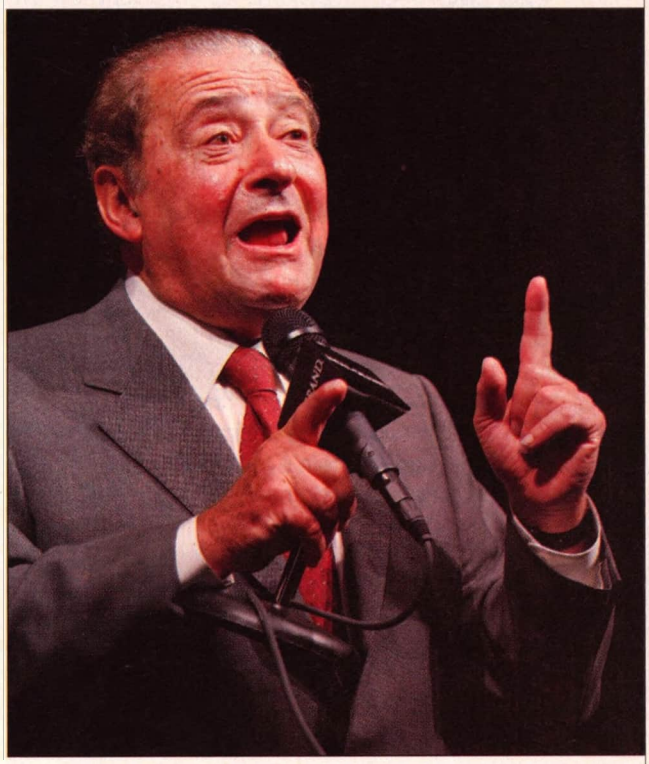


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Arum's defense of Margarito was indefensible

In the aftermath of the Cali commission hearing that ended with the handing down of a minimum of one-year suspensions of Margarito's and Capetillo's licenses, there are a few interesting topics to discuss. For starters, were the suspensions fair? If you ask the Baggamuffin, if anything, they were a little lenient. Capetillo, in particular, could have gotten a full lifetime suspension. As it stands, both men can reapply for licenses after the year passes. To a boxer who normally fights only twice a year, a six-month suspension would have been meaningless.

Which leads us to the next interest topic, Bob Arum's tirade against the ruling. This was like if Evander Holyfield had complained about the gift draw he got against Lennox Lewis because it wasn't a gift win. And for Arum to have the audacity to suggest he'd be taking his fighter to Mexico, where the suspension wouldn't be recognized ...

Well, that leads us to aftermath topic number three: Cotto is less-than-thrilled with Arum for so fervently defending the man who (perhaps illegally) battered him. Wouldn't it be a delicious, come-uppance-y twist if Arum lost Cotto, the younger fighter with presumably more financial upside, because of how he stood beside Margarito?

If Margarito is a cheater, then Arum is coming off as an enabler. But let's not lose sight of the hero in this sordid tale: Naazim Richardson. If it's only cheating if you get caught, then Mosley's trainer might have saved the boxing world from a whole lot of non-cheating.

80 Is The New 70

Congratulations to Larry Merchant, who, a couple of weeks before his 78th birthday, had his contract with HBO renewed through 2011. It's good to see that age-ism has given way to simple evaluations of who's best at the job, and Larry, who re-wrote the book on boxing color commentary, brings a perspective to the big fights that nobody else can duplicate.

The Hall of Famer will be 80 when this contract runs out, and hopefully it'll be *his* decision, not anybody else's, as to whether he calls it quits at that point. But if he does decide to hang up his microphone and bowtie, then that means the Baggadocio had better get his resume together and send it off to Ross Greenburg. If age isn't an issue, then who better to fill Merchant's shoes someday than the Baggatorium? Not only would it be great from a paycheck perspective, but it would also be desirable to literally fill his shoes, since the Baggenstein's toes are poking through holes in the ones he's wearing now.

When Push Comes To Suspension

So Howard Grant, the trainer of Librado Andrade, got a three-month suspension for pushing referee Marlon B. Wright at the conclusion of Andrade's highly controversial loss to Lucian Bute. Look, the Bagghetti has watched Wright's count over Bute at the end of the 12th round with his VCR in fast-forward mode, and it still lasts more than 10 seconds. How can you suspend Grant for a harmless little shove moments after a referee so clearly had screwed his fighter? Instead of a suspension, Grant should have gotten some kind of medal for showing the restraint not to haul off and deck Wright.

Look at it this way: If someone steals your car, are the cops going to arrest you for kicking the thief in the shins?

Pac's The Pick

On the heels of the Bagguini's triumphant prediction that Manny Pacquiao would beat Oscar De La Hoya (yes, yours truly intends to mention that at least once in every column this year), the world is dying to know whom the Baggnosticator picks to win 2009's first superfight, Pacquiao vs. Ricky Hatton.

Well, after a long look into the Crystal Bagg, Carnac the Baggnificent has decided to dance with the one that brung him (or however that cliché goes) and stick with Pacquiao. That left hand just doesn't miss, and Hatton isn't exactly "Sweat Pea" Whitaker with his head movement. Expect a one-sided beatdown, not unlike Pacquiao-De La Hoya and Pacquiao-David Diaz, with Hatton lasting a smidge longer—into the 11th round before his corner mercifully throws in the towel.

There's only one Ricky Hatton. But he'll feel like he's seeing about a half-dozen Manny Pacquiaos by night's end.

PHOTO BY JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETY IMAGES

Carnac the Baggnificent picks Manny ... again

The Monthly Mailbagg

Special note about this month's Mailbagg: Instead of using McAfee or Norton, the Bagg Bopper downloaded Naazim Richardson Security to virus-scan all e-mails. Nothing potentially hazardous sneaks by Naazim.

Mr. Bagg,

Don't know if you had a copyright on that "Nightmare" idea of yours that appeared in the November 2008 issue of RING, but Dino Duva issued a press release on Sam Peter's behalf calling Chris Arreola out in a fight where the loser has to change his nickname. I suggest you give Dino a call to make sure you get that paper.

Alexis Terrazas

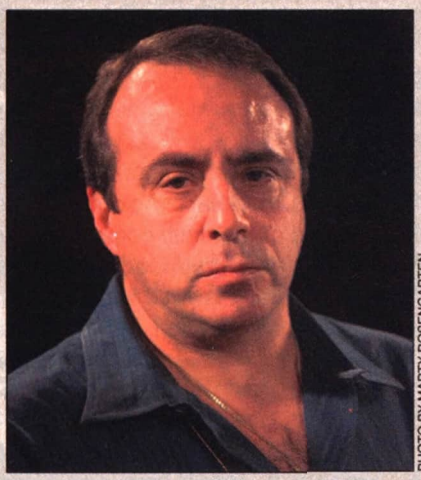


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Did Dino steal Bagg's idea?

Alexis,

By "paper," do you mean money? The Baggapalooza gave up on keeping up with modern lingo about 25 years ago, as soon as "bad" started meaning "good."

In any case, of course the Baggtacular didn't have a copyright on his idea for a loser-gives-up-his-nickname match, and Dino isn't about to volunteer to cut the world's greatest boxing writer in on the profits. There's only so much decency you can expect from a guy who was named after Fred Flintstone's pet snorkasaurus.

The fact is, this fight is a natural, and not because of the nickname stipulation (although that would be fun, especially if they used the Baggomatic's idea that the winner gets to give the loser a new nickname). It makes sense for Arreola because he needs to beat a legitimate top-10 contender if he's going to make people buy him as a credible challenger to Wladimir Klitschko. It makes sense for Peter because removing Arreola's undefeated record would go a long way toward erasing the stench of his non-effort against Vitali Klitschko. It makes sense for the fans because these are two offense-minded knockout artists who seem potentially evenly matched.

And there's the additional intrigue of watching to see which guy is going to show up more grotesquely overweight and undertrained. Wouldn't it be great to see a heavyweight fight with no clinching? Well, if both guys' guts are big enough, they'll just belly-bump anytime they get close and bounce off before either man can tie the other up.

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Angel Hernandez, who had a losing record in his previous nine fights and an overall record of 28-7 (16) before being brought in as an opponent for James McGirt Jr. in January and proving that not all apples land particularly close to their parental trees. McGirt, whose father and trainer is two-division former titlist Buddy McGirt, was 19-1-1 (9) coming in, but whereas his dad would have picked apart a stubby, one-dimensional pressure fighter like Hernandez, Junior let Hernandez fight his fight and eke out a close 10-round decision.

But enough about what Buddy-Lite did wrong. Let's talk about what Hernandez did right. Despite being 33 years old and weighing a career-high 163 pounds (he was at his best as a junior middleweight about seven years ago), "Toro" showed up and gave it everything he had, bulled his way inside to negate McGirt's five-inch height advantage and four-inch edge in reach, and just let his hands go round after round. It wasn't pretty, but it made the younger man uncomfortable, and the result was a two-point edge on two cards and a one-point advantage on the third for Hernandez.

And get this: Two fights earlier, Hernandez bumped off an 11-0 prospect named Louis Turner. McGirt may have been born into a fighting family, but Hernandez was actually born to fight. And with his second de-bunking of a prospect's myth in three bouts, he's fought his way to a Stingray. ■

PHOTO BY JOHN BOOZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Hernandez: Latest Stingray winner

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Mosley Magic

Wow! Talk about impressive. Shane Mosley's knockout of Antonio Margarito was one of the most complete performances ever produced by a professional fighter. I favored Margarito going in, but as a boxing fan, I absolutely love what the result does for Mosley's career, the welterweight division, and, most of all, the sport.

RICHARD REYES
27_rarereyes@att.net

Congratulations to Shane Mosley for fighting like a 25-year-old fighter against Antonio Margarito. He obviously picked up on some things from watching Margarito vs. Miguel Cotto. Margarito's head is an easy target for any fighter, but Mosley knows you can't shake off bodyshots. The only punch that Margarito was able to land successfully was his jab, which he barely threw. If the "Tijuana Tornado" wants to keep fighting, he has to learn some defensive skills and work off the jab.

One more note: Referee Raul Caiz Sr. was way too slow in stopping the fight. It should have been stopped in the previous round.

JEREMY GUERRIERI
Painesville, OH

Mosley And The Ring Belt

Why isn't Shane Mosley THE RING's welterweight champion? I understand that he lost to Miguel Cotto and was rated third behind Cotto, but it was a close decision loss. Antonio Margarito punished and stopped Cotto in their fight. Mosley dominated Margarito from the first bell until their fight was stopped. I believe by THE RING's own standards on how vacant championship belts can be filled Mosley could be and should be THE RING welterweight champion.

AARON BATTALINI
Economy, PA

Editor's note: Going into the Mosley-Margarito fight, Margarito was THE RING's number-one contender, Cotto was number two, and Mosley was number three. Therefore, the match did not automatically qualify to fill the vacancy. While under certain circumstances THE RING will recognize a bout between the number-one and number-three contenders for a vacant title, the fact that Cotto had beaten Mosley, and was therefore ranked above him, complicated the situation. Before making a decision, THE RING polled its Ratings Advisory Panel seeking the membership's counsel. Approximately 55

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

The vast majority of letters this issue concerned the Shane Mosley-Antonio Margarito fight and its scandalous aftermath. Among the readers who contacted THE RING with their comments were Richard Reyes, Jeremy Guerrieri, Aaron Battalini, Jake Vanderkooy, and Jeremy Leete.

percent of responding Panel members voted against recognizing the bout as being for the vacant world title. Although it was a very difficult decision to make, after a lengthy discussion, THE RING editorial board sided with the majority of the Panel members. The decision not to recognize the fight as being for the vacant welterweight championship was announced on ringtv.com well in advance of the fight. We realize that the decision did not please everyone, but experience has taught us that taking a conservative approach in such vital matters has proven the best course of action.

A Loaded Question

I have been buying your outstanding magazine since the summer of 1967 (when Joe Frazier was often featured). Question for someone who might know: In the November 2008 issue there is a picture on page 107 of a victorious Antonio Margarito with his hands outstretched in victory immediately after pummeling Miguel Cotto. Perhaps it is my eyes (or imagination), but does it not appear that Margarito's right hand is quite lumpy? Can one even tell from a mere photo if cheating took place?

I love Margarito as a fighter, but now, in the wake of the disclosure that he attempted to fight Mosley with illegally wrapped hands, I am deeply concerned that many of his fights may have involved Margarito's use of loaded gloves. Thanks for always being "The Bible Of Boxing."

JAKE VANDERKOOY
Brampton, Ontario

Editor's Note: Boxers are allowed to have some extra bandage over their knuckles, so that could very well be what you saw in the photo. Naturally, now that Margarito has had his California boxing license revoked for attempting to fight Mosley with illegally wrapped hands, a shadow has been cast over his previous victories. To date, however, no evidence has been produced to prove that Margarito had indeed fought with loaded gloves.

Alive And Filling Arenas

The recent Shane Mosley-Antonio Margarito fight should prove to any doubters that boxing is indeed still very much alive. Although Los Angeles' Staples Center is a relatively new arena, the fact that Mosley-Margarito set a new attendance record for the venue speaks volumes about the health of the sport.

We continue to hear that MMA will be the death of our sport. But I would like to reassure older boxing fans that there *is* a young fan base out there, as well as those of us who have been following the sport for many years. I can say without any doubt that I will continue to support my favorite sport. As long as the best fights are made, the fans will be there. So to all of the critics, get used to it. Boxing isn't going anywhere.

JEREMY LEETE
Seattle, WA

Stay Retired, Floyd

In the wake of Manny Pacquiao's destruction of Oscar De La Hoya, there seems to be a growing desire for Floyd Mayweather to come out of retirement and face either Pacquiao or Shane Mosley. Well, I for one have no desire to see those matches. Floyd, you are boring! Your arrogant, surly attitude turned me off a long time ago, starting with your infamous "slave wages" comment. What an insult to any young fighter who would kill to fight on HBO for millions of dollars. Your defensive, safety-first style puts me to sleep. Moreover, I think you got a gift decision against Jose Luis Castillo in the first fight.

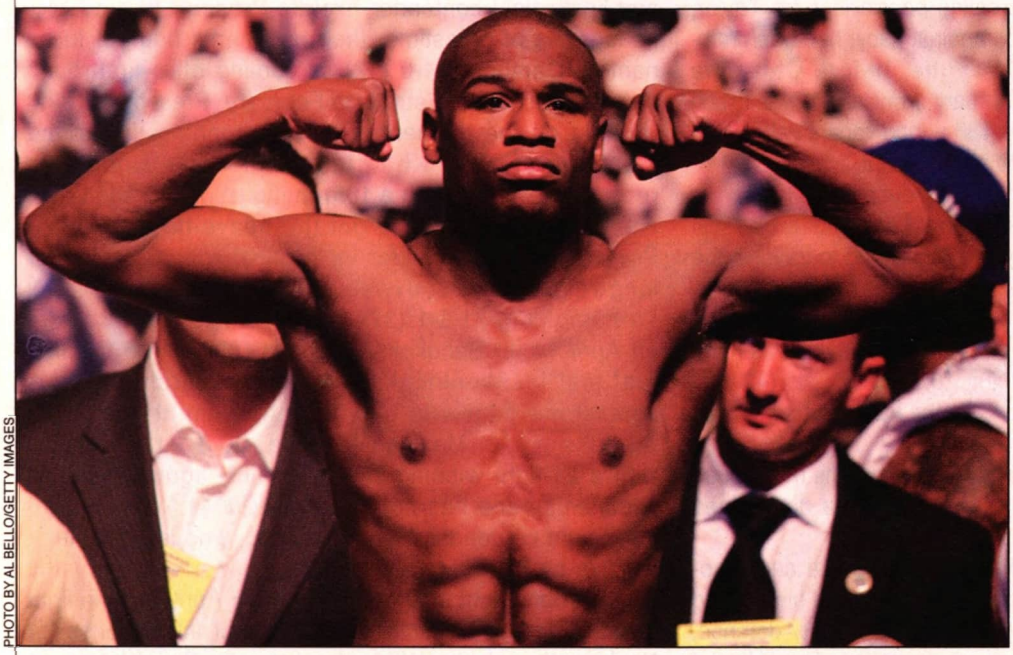


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Floyd Mayweather flexes after making weight for his fight with Oscar De La Hoya. Whether "Pretty Boy" will return was still unknown, but reader Anthony Medina hopes he's seen the last of him in a boxing ring.

Floyd, I'm not denying that you have tremendous boxing skills and that you beat the best available opponents as you moved up in weight, but your belief that you're the best boxers of all-time is ridiculous. I think guys like Aaron Pryor, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Sugar Ray Robinson, to name just a few, would have run you out of the ring. If you're so desperate to come back into the spotlight, why not have a rematch with The Big Show? They can put it on pay-per-view, so you can rip off the public again and earn millions doing it.

ANTHONY MEDINA
San Leandro, CA ■

By Joseph Santoliquito

Froch Risk Undefeated Record Against Taylor

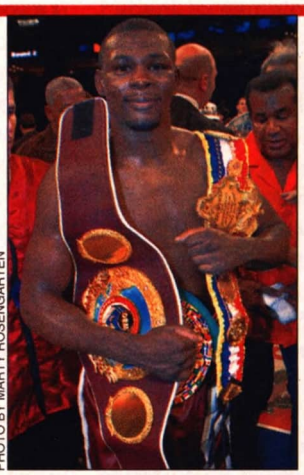


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Taylor could use another big victory

Jermain Taylor has been at a crossroads ever since he lost consecutive fights to THE RING middleweight world champion **Kelly Pavlik**. The 2000 Sydney Olympic bronze medalist is in a precarious position. One more loss and his career as an elite fighter could quickly teeter over into the "name opponent" category. Gone would be the credibility gained by his consecutive victories over **Bernard Hopkins**, first winning and then defending the world middleweight championship.

In November 2008, however, Taylor's career received a little boost from his dominating performance over former Olympic teammate **Jeff Lacy**, in Taylor's second foray as a super middleweight.

"Bad Intentions" will be looking to climb another step closer to his former status when he challenges WBC super middleweight titleholder **Carl Froch**, April 25, on Showtime at Foxwoods Resort in Mashantucket, Connecticut.

The fight raises some interesting possibilities for Taylor, who, based on his performance against Lacy, had been hoping for a fight with **Joe Calzaghe**, before Calzaghe announced his retirement in February. Ironically, it was Froch who claimed one of Calzaghe's 168-pound vacant belts when Calzaghe opted to move to light heavyweight.

Froch, 24-0 (19), has fought throughout most of his career in Nottingham, England, but said after beating **Jean Pascal** for the vacant WBC belt that he may be willing to travel to the United States to defend against Taylor, 28-2-1 (17).

If Taylor brings the same jab he used to pummel Lacy, it could make for an interesting and fun fight. Taylor was highly accurate against Lacy, landing 107 of 257 jabs (42 percent), and will need that jab to keep the hard-hitting Froch at a safe distance.

Froch, on the other hand, is coming off one the most grueling fights of his career, when he beat back a determined Pascal this past December.

Against Taylor, Froch will probably use the same approach as he did against Pascal, working behind his jab and then unleashing big rights. But Froch has a leaky defense, something Taylor will no doubt try to exploit. Froch has a tendency to keep his left hand low, enabling opponents to strike over the top, as did Pascal, stunning Froch in the second round.

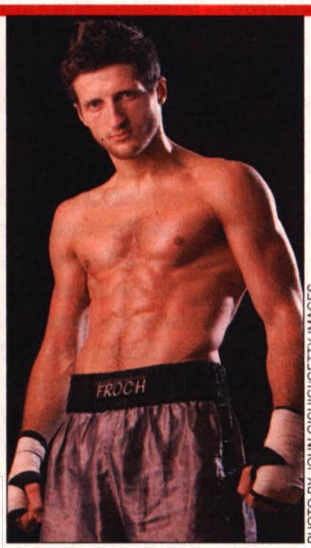


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Froch is willing to come to the U.S. fight Taylor

But Froch is hoping to enter the Taylor fight considerably healthier than he did against Pascal. That night the Englishman claims to have been hampered by a series of training injuries, including a cracked rib, perforated eardrum, and a cut that wasn't completely healed.

Listen Up

WBA middleweight beltholder **Felix Sturm**, 31-2-1 (13), steps back into the ring to defend against Japan's **Koji Sato** at the Konig Palast in Krefeld, Germany, on April 25. Sato, 14-0 (13), won the OPBF middleweight title in September 2008, but has never faced anybody rated in THE RING's 160-pound top 10. His kayo percentage seems to indicate that Sato has a puncher's chance, but due to limited opposition, his stats could very well be misleading ... In Primm, Nevada, on April 17, Showtime will feature rising featherweight star **Yuriorkis Gamboa** and lightweight contender **Breidis Prescott** in a doubleheader. As of presstime, their opponents had yet to be named. Gamboa, 14-0 (12), is coming off a first-round stoppage of **Walter Estrada** in February. Prescott, looking to build on the momentum of his stunning first-round stoppage of **Amir Khan** last September, upped his record to 21-0 (18) with a 10th-round disqualification over **Humberto Toledo**, who got the heave-ho after biting Prescott on the shoulder in the final round ... Former long-reigning WBC flyweight titleholder **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**, 71-3-1 (37), fights **Julio Cesar Miranda**, on April 14, in Bangkok, Thailand. This will be the first real test for Wonjongkam since his March '08 draw against the man who took the title from him in 2007, **Daisuke Naito**. Mexican Miranda, 29-3-1 (22), enters with a 21-fight winning streak—mainly against suspect opponents—and has not lost since 2004 ... Junior bantamweight contender **Nibuo Noshiro**, who is rated number five by THE RING, will take on **Konosuke Tomiyama** in a 12-round fight in Osaka, Japan, on April 11. The fight is listed as a WBA junior bantamweight title defense for Noshiro, though the WBA also lists **Vic Darchinyan** as its other junior bantamweight "champion." ■

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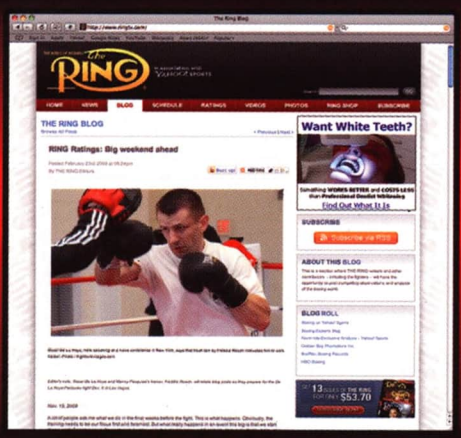

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